

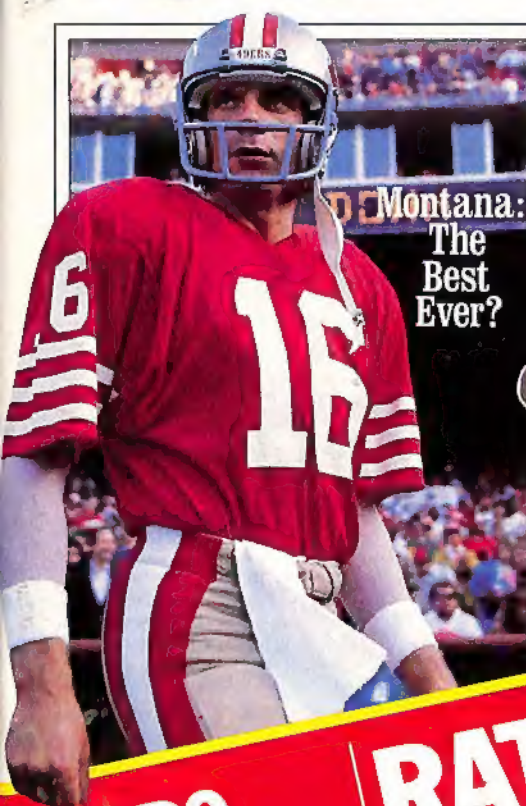
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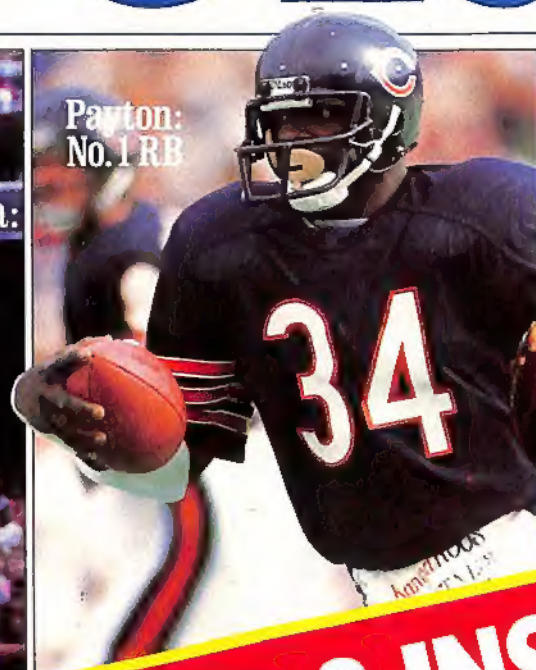
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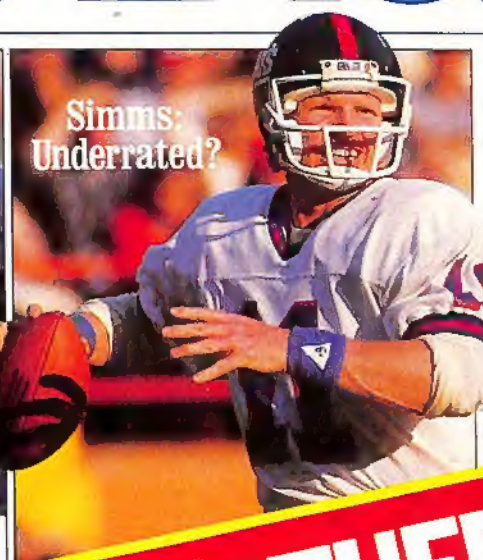
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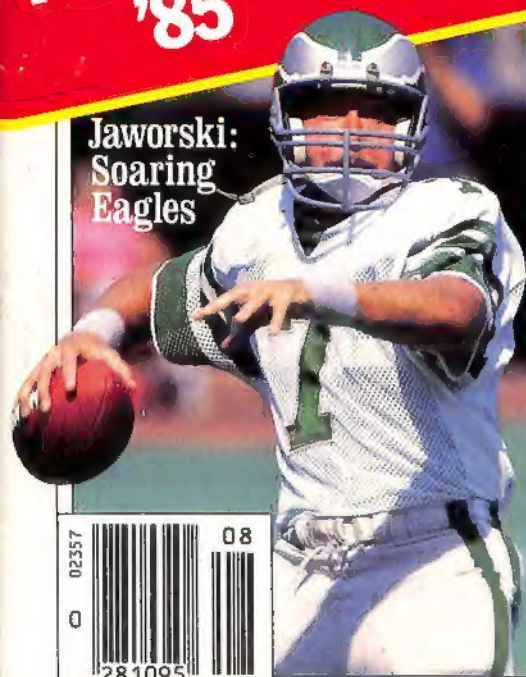
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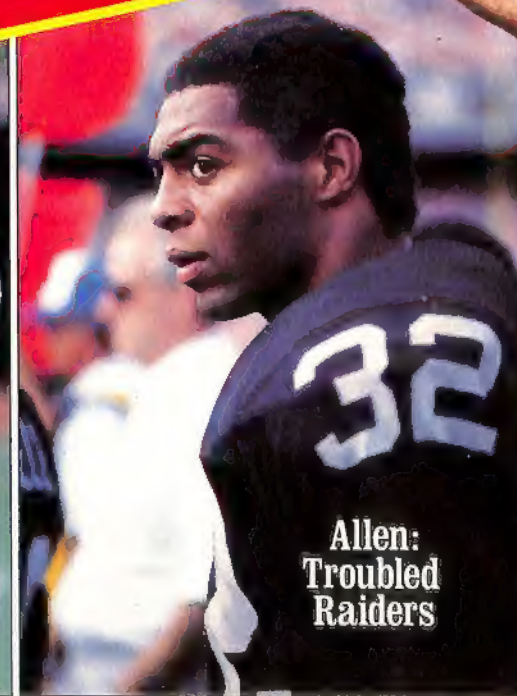
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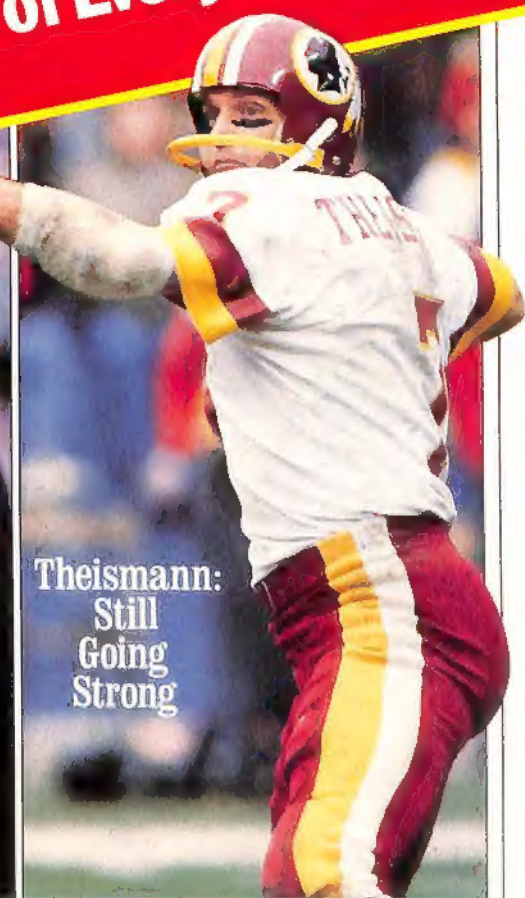
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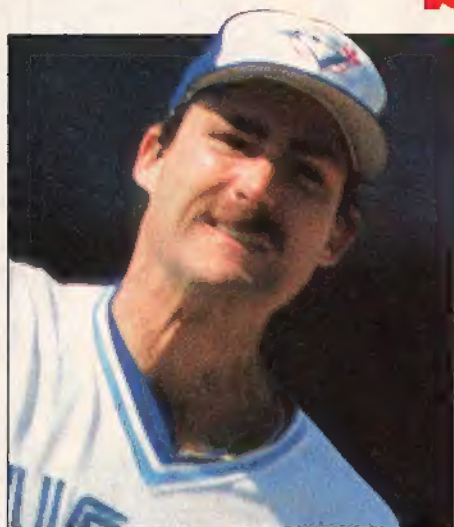


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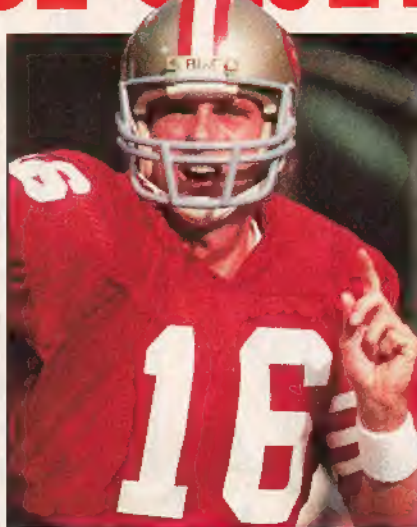
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## EDITOR'S NOTE

**A**RE YOU READY FOR ANOTHER season of NFL football? We sure are. So on page 26 you'll find a sensational 24-page Football Ratings & Inside Stuff special section that laughs at and ranks everything about the NFL game except the waterboys.

Our computer rankings are the combined efforts of writer Allen Barra and wizard George Ignatin, an associate professor of economics at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. The pair coaxed their IBM 360 computer to reveal the teams most likely to improve, the teams most likely to disappoint (with some surprises), who the best coaches are, and who the top running backs are in the NFL.

Who's better—Montana or Marino? You'll find out. And you'll learn why the Jets won't win in this century, 10 reasons to hate the Dallas Cowboys (sorry, Phyllis), and how greed turned the NFL into a passing circus.

Experts Barra and Ignatin first got together in 1972, when Allen was a UAB student. "We were on local television down there right before the Alabama-Notre Dame Sugar Bowl game in 1973," says Barra. "We picked Alabama to win, 23-22. They lost, 24-23."

Give the computer credit, but Barra and Ignatin add a lot of subjective analyses as well. "The computer gives us an evaluation of the past season," Allen says. "George and I then discuss—at times argue—about the individual matchups. That's the key. To match one team's strength against another's weakness."

Barra cites last year's Super Bowl. "The computer picked an eight-point win for San Francisco over Miami [the computer picked a 49er-Dolphin final before the playoffs began]. But we saw that the 49ers had a lot of strengths matched up against Miami's weaknesses, such as Montana's mobility against the Dolphins' inability to get to the passer. That spells disaster. Also, there was the 49ers' running game against the Dolphins' vulnerability against the run. The computer said San Francisco by eight; George and I predicted a rout.

"Also, the Super Bowl is a different situation. Any time Bill Walsh gets two weeks to

prepare his defense against any team's offense, he'll shut it down."

We hope you'll enjoy this Ratings & Inside Stuff special section. Next month INSIDE SPORTS' specials continue, with our big NFL and NCAA Preview Issue. We'll boldly pre-



**BYU's Bosco eyes a repeat performance.**

dict the order of finish of each of the NFL's six divisions, and we'll call in our college football expert to predict who the top 20 collegiate teams will be.

When Ara Parseghian forecast the 1984 collegiate season for us, like most experts he missed the call on Brigham Young University. Ara's No. 1 team, Nebraska, finished fourth in the final AP poll.

And where will we rank BYU this year? We'll let you know next month, but we can tell you now what BYU coach LaVell Edwards thinks. "I would be surprised if we were ranked No. 1," he says. "But I would suspect that we must be ranked somewhere in the top five, if only because Robbie Bosco is coming back." Senior All-America quarterback Bosco definitely puts BYU among the elite. Next month the experts will tell you if he's strong enough to start the year where he left off last season—No. 1.

*Michael K. Herbert*



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334698 DAVE GRUSIN  
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## FAST COMEBACKS

## Craig Breedlove's Land Rocket Aims At Mach One

WHAT DO JIM BROWN, Wilt Chamberlain, and Craig Breedlove have in common? For one, they each dominated their particular sport during the mid-1960s. And nearly two decades later, they each talked about making a comeback in their sport even though they were in their mid-40s.

However, unlike Brown and Wilt, Breedlove is serious about making his comeback.

Twenty years ago, Craig Breedlove rocketed, literally, to stardom. Before reaching his 28th birthday, the five-time land-speed record holder had his Spirit of America land-bound turboprops surpassing velocities of 400, 500, and 600 mph. What speed demon Breedlove did not realize back then was that those heydays of glory would have to last him for the next 20 years.

Today, the 48-year-old Breedlove looks back on the frustrating two-decade absence from land-speed record-breaking, while anxiously awaiting next year's attempt, which he hopes will see the third Spirit of America cracking Mach One.

In the spring of 1986, Breedlove will attempt to take his Spirit of America Sonic II ground rocket beyond the current record (633.468 mph) held by England's Richard Noble, and then beyond the speed of sound (approximately 741 mph). "We are also hoping to have other American teams, plus competitors from England, Australia, and Russia join us in the attempt," says Breedlove. "The land-speed record has not been touched since 1983, making the time ripe for history in the making."

Breedlove has spent 20 years gathering funds and engineering expertise for his final assault on the existing record. It is believed that his vehicle (when fully developed) will have the capability of reaching speeds of 1,000 mph. The Sonic II's space-age aspects include use of advanced rocket fuel, a highly specialized aerodynamic design for optimum lift and drag characteristics, and state-of-the-art explosion resistant fuel tanks, which provide an 80% savings in weight.

By the time Breedlove and his crew chief (son Norman) are ready to try Mach One, their vehicle will represent more than 100,000 man-hours in design and construction, at a cost of \$1.1 million in labor and materials.



**Breedlove's buddy is Sonic II, a bipropellant liquid fuel rocket.**

It's been a long road back for Breedlove, who still remains introspective. "It is great to achieve a goal," he says, "but I think sometimes it's better to keep reaching for one. What people fail to realize is that most of the fun of catching a dream is getting there."

By the time Breedlove was 17, he had won several speed trophies. In 1959 he watched Mickey Thompson's try at breaking a land-speed record and became, quite frankly, obsessed. "I really do credit Mickey with inspiring me," says Breedlove of the famed drag racer. "But I differ in that my approach is more from the standpoint of aircraft technology than hot-rod technology."

Hence, Breedlove began work on the first Spirit of America—a three-wheeled jet racer. By 1963 he had set a new world record of 407 mph. The following year Breedlove hit two world marks (468.719 and 526.777). After a serious accident demolished the original Spirit of America, Breedlove set a new record in 1965 at 555.127 mph. Five days later, Art Arfons hit 576.533, but one week after Arfons assumed the crown, Breedlove wrested it back, surpassing the 600 mph barrier (600.601).

Sitting on top of the world after his final record, which would stand for five years, Breedlove started a slow decline. It began when his wife, a childhood sweetheart, filed for divorce. Then the sponsors became scarce. "I had a lot of things working against me," Breedlove recalls. "My personal life was in shambles, which in turn scared off all of the sponsors. I saw 20 years of work destroyed in four years, leaving me with nothing but a huge pile of bills."

Breedlove made an unsuccessful attempt at drag racing. Then, 37



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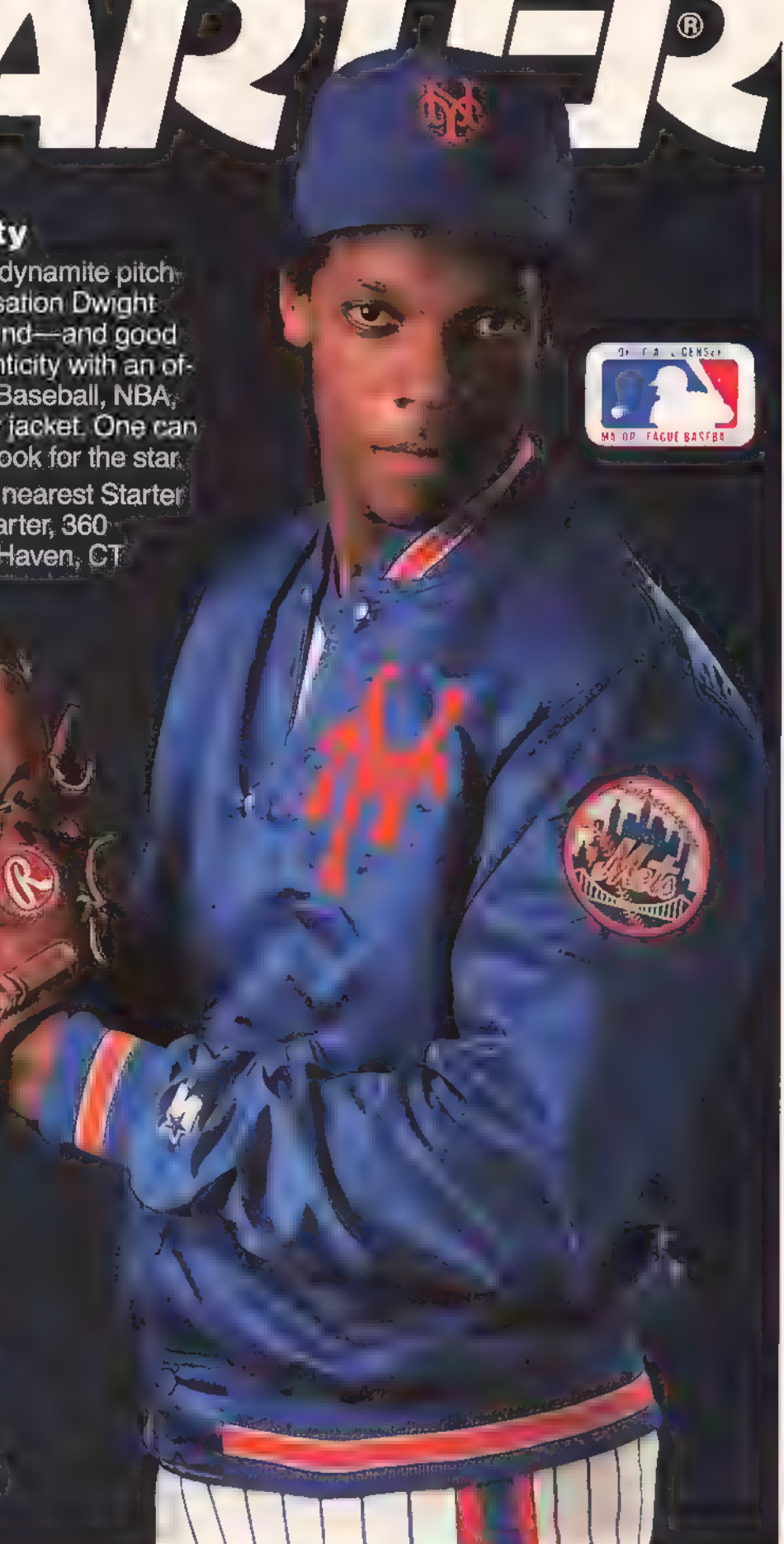
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and debt-ridden, he gave up racing and started selling real estate. Once he had made enough money to pay back his creditors, Breedlove became part owner of the West End Tennis Club in the South Bay Area of California. Two years later, in 1979, his second wife was killed in an auto accident.

"Peggy's death drastically changed my view of things," says Breedlove. "She was my inspiration to try it once again."

And so Breedlove will. He has spent the last few years scraping together funds for a prototype of Sonic II. To date, the Southland Corporation and the Du Pont Company have signed on as sponsors for the '86 speed attempt.

"It's amazing," Breedlove says, "that in my 20s I never seemed to let thoughts of mortality interfere with my pursuit of the world record. Now that I'm approaching 50, I ask myself, do I really want to go out there and do this one more time?"

## THE FAST LANE

### World Land-Speed Record History

Record-Holder	Date	Speed
Malcolm Campbell, England	Feb. 5, 1931	246.086
Malcolm Campbell, England	Feb. 24, 1932	253.960
Malcolm Campbell, England	Feb. 22, 1933	272.109
Malcolm Campbell, England	Mar. 7, 1935	276.820
Malcolm Campbell, England	Sep. 3, 1935	301.130
George Eyston, England	Nov. 19, 1937	311.420
George Eyston, England	Aug. 27, 1938	345.500
Sir John Cobb, England	Sep. 15, 1938	350.200
George Eyston, England	Sep. 16, 1938	357.500
Sir John Cobb, England	Aug. 23, 1939	369.740
Sir John Cobb, England	Sep. 16, 1947	394.199
Mickey Thompson, USA	Oct. 6, 1959	406.000
Craig Breedlove, USA	Aug. 5, 1963	407.450
Tom Green, USA	Oct. 2, 1964	413.200
Art Arfons, USA	Oct. 5, 1964	434.020
Craig Breedlove, USA	Oct. 13, 1964	468.719
Craig Breedlove, USA	Oct. 15, 1964	526.777
Art Arfons, USA	Oct. 27, 1964	536.710
Craig Breedlove, USA	Nov. 2, 1965	555.127
Art Arfons, USA	Nov. 7, 1965	576.533
Craig Breedlove, USA	Nov. 15, 1965	600.601
Gary Gabelich, USA	Oct. 23, 1970	622.407
Richard Noble, England	Oct. 4, 1983	633.468

## CONTRAS

### The 'Dump the DH' Counterrevolution

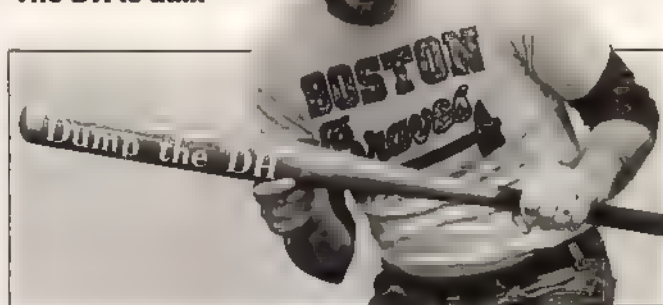
WHO IS HOWIE NEWMAN AND WHY IS HE SAYING ALL OF these awful things about the designated hitter?

Newman, 34, has been a sports writer for the Lynn (Mass.) *Item* since 1982 and is leading an attempt to get rid of the 11-year-old rule, "which takes too much color and excitement away from the game." Newman, also a musician of note, has organized a "Dump the DH" campaign, which is "designed to alert Americans to the inherent evils of the DH—and convince them to cast their votes accordingly."

Newman is licking his chops in anticipation of a planned fan poll conducted by new commissioner Peter Ueberroth. "All polls, every one of them, supports the theory that fans want to dump the DH," Newman points out. "Most polls show that 60% to 70% are in favor of eliminating the DH."

"Dump the DH" is a nonprofit venture that makes fans aware of the issue before the actual voting begins. (At press time, no specific date had been set for such a poll. INSIDE SPORTS contacted the commis-

**Howie Newman:**  
**'The DH is dull.'**



sioner's office, and spokesman Chuck Adams said: "The commissioner's survey is in its preliminary stage. I don't know how it will be done. I suppose work has been done on it, but nothing that is being publicized. The original timetable was for polling to be done in the spring, with results available this summer. It will not be strictly a DH survey. It will contain questions with other baseball topics.")

The "Dump the DH" campaign has two goals, according to Newman. "The primary goal is to try to reach as many people as possible. It's difficult to change people's minds. I want them to have a chance to express their feelings. Second, I want to pick up percentage points for Ueberroth's poll."

Obviously, Newman calls himself a baseball purist. "One of the most enjoyable parts of the game is strategy. There was a game a few years back when Fernando Valenzuela played the outfield. That's excitement. The DH takes out a lot of the excitement and variables."

One of the biggest arguments thrown in the face of the anti-DH people is that the DH has kept stars in the game longer. People such as Carl Yastrzemski and Hank Aaron would have retired earlier than they did, and current stars such as Reggie Jackson, Don Baylor, Dave Kingman, and Hal McRae might be retired now if not for the DH.

"Most of those careers," Newman retorts, "haven't been worth extending. Hank Aaron had two miserable years as Milwaukee's DH. Billy Williams hit something like .211 and .240 with Oakland as a DH. Even Yaz wasn't all that productive his last couple of years."

"While the DH may have lengthened some hitters' careers, it's shortened the careers of some American League pitchers. At the start of this season there were eight pitchers in baseball who were at least 40 years old. Is it a coincidence that seven of the eight played their whole career or most of their career in the National League?"

Newman likes to cite Nolan Ryan and Catfish Hunter as good examples of what the DH has done to pitching careers. "It would have been nice to watch Hunter pitch a few more years," Newman says. "By the time he was 30 years old he was developing arm problems, thanks to the DH. Meanwhile, Nolan Ryan's career has been extended because he switched back to the National League."

According to Newman, some of the greatest moments in baseball history include offensive feats by pitchers. The list includes:

- In 1918, Babe Ruth had a 13-7 record with a 2.22 ERA, while batting .300 with 11 HRs (tied for the league high) and 64 RBIs.
- Ken Brett homered in four consecutive starts, pitching for the 1973 Phillies.
- Atlanta reliever Terry Forster has a .419 career batting average.
- Rick Wise pitched a no-hitter and socked two home runs on June 23, 1973—one of the two games that season in which he hit a pair of homers.

And, finally, Newman urges us to remember Tony Cloninger. "In 1966, Cloninger hit two grand slams in one game while pitching for the Braves. He's the only NL player ever to do that." ■



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By BOB RUBIN

# Rating the Network Sports Broadcast Teams

*NBC ranks No. 1 in four of the nine major televised sports*

**R**ATING BROADCASTERS IS A tricky business. A guy you think is great, someone else may find terrible, and vice versa. With that disclaimer, here's one viewer's ratings of the broadcasting teams for nine major sports televised by at least two networks:

**BASEBALL**—With its first team of Vin Scully and Joe Garagiola, and its backup tandem of Tony Kubek and Bob Costas, NBC has both superior talent and depth. Scully is knowledgeable, articulate, and, at times, eloquent—in short, simply the best in the business. A writer once used his unedited, word-for-word call of the ninth inning of a Sandy Koufax no-hitter as a chapter in a

## BASEBALL

1. NBC, Scully and Garagiola
2. ABC, Michaels, Palmer, and Cosell

book. It's extraordinary for live prose to stand up in print.

Garagiola has toned down his comedy shtick and honed his analytical skills. At last year's World Series, he proved a seer at calling pitchouts. The two men have meshed beautifully. The "chemistry" is right.

ABC's first team of Al Michaels, Jim Palmer, and Howard Cosell has one too many members. Cosell is a minus. He doesn't know the game well, and what he does know is frequently dated, as evidenced by his numerous references to the Brooklyn Dodgers of the late 1940s and early '50s. Before ABC bought into baseball, Cosell called the game "boring," and suggested its day had passed. The same could be said of Cosell as a baseball broadcaster.

Too bad. Michaels may be second only to Scully among the nation's baseball play-by-play men, and Palmer has distinguished himself in his brief career as an analyst, display-

ing expertise, humor, trenchant anecdotes, and, or course, those matinee looks.

**PRO FOOTBALL**—In Pat Summerall and John Madden, CBS has the best individual team, but NBC's top tandem of Dick Enberg and Merlin Olsen are only a tad behind, and NBC has the greater depth of talent behind the first teams. The ABC

## PRO FOOTBALL

1. CBS, Summerall and Madden
2. NBC, Enberg and Olsen
3. ABC, Gifford, Simpson, and Meredith

Monday Night Football crew of Frank Gifford, O. J. Simpson, and Don Meredith is in disarray.

Madden is a jewel, a natural entertainer and raconteur. Summerall's laconic, low-key personality makes for a perfect counterbalance. If you put a livelier personality with Big John, you'd have to put a chain around the booth.

Enberg is the consummate pro, Olsen a gentle giant and a teacher, noted for his painstakingly meticulous preparation. The CBS team gets the nod only because Madden can make even a dull game watchable.

When the ABC team lost Howard Cosell, its telecasts lost their lightning rod and pizzazz. Like him or hate him, you couldn't ignore him. And Cosell's absence destroyed whatever little Meredith could contribute in the way of his country-boy putdowns. Without a straight man, the cornpone falls flat.

The game has passed Meredith by. His notorious failure to do his homework becomes more and more glaring. He frequently seems bored. ABC should drop him and leave Gifford and the improving Simpson (who still must learn not to mumble or overcoach) alone in the booth.

One notable comer: NBC's Bob Trumpy,

the most outspoken, candid, gutsy broadcaster in football. He will work the Monday night games with Don Criqui this year and provide a welcome audio alternative to the ABC crew.

**COLLEGE FOOTBALL**—Oh, my, it's ABC and the special ears of corn served up by Keith Jackson over the fragmented teams of CBS.

People either think Jackson's (in Jacksonese) "a hoss" or the noneating end of a hoss, but his orotund style and penchant for dramatization plays here. College football is pretty girls, bands, and hoopla, and Jackson's hammy approach complements it well. Lots of people do Jackson imitations, and imitation is the sincerest form, etc.

Frank Broyles has improved as an analyst because he's long enough removed from coaching to cast a critical eye. But he tends to belabor the obvious, and calls everyone short of the waterboys "a great ath-uh-lete."

CBS throws waves into the booth. One week it was Brent Musburger and Ara Parseghian and sometimes Pat Haden. Another week it was Gary Bender and Haden. At the Cotton Bowl it was Lindsey Nelson, Haden,

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

1. ABC, Jackson and Broyles
2. CBS, Musburger, Parseghian, et al.

and Parseghian. Bender and Musburger are competent play-by-play men. Parseghian seldom criticizes, and has an irritatingly squeaky voice.

**COLLEGE BASKETBALL**—Here again, inspired chemistry gives the edge to NBC's team of Enberg and Al McGuire over Brent Musburger and Billy Packer. NBC gives viewers a professor and a flake; cool, intelligent professionalism and off-the-wall humor and blarney. Enberg sets McGuire up



perfectly, and even when he screws up, McGuire can get away with it solely on charm. He's said he's so bad he's good, and he's right.

Musburger has toned down from his hyper NBA broadcasting days when he was

---

## COLLEGE BASKETBALL

1. NBC, Enberg and McGuire
  2. CBS, Musburger and Packer
- 

known as "Breathless Brent," but his forte is still his role as studio host and linchpin of "The NFL Today." Packer conducts a coaching clinic. He knows the game as well as anyone, but he talks too much, he's totally devoid of humor, and he pays no attention at all to the fans, cheerleaders, bands, and other hoopla that add so much atmosphere and appeal to college basketball.

GOLF—ABC rates a slight edge over CBS, with NBC a distant third.

The Roonies only do three tournaments a year, but what a trio—the U.S. and British Opens, and the PGA Championship. ABC's anchor emeritus Jim McKay has shown signs of aging, but when the stakes are high, a big picture must be drawn, a scene set, and a story line defined and followed, he's still the best in the business. He puts you on the golf course.

Analyst Dave Marr is also a plus with his winning personality and ability to communicate the game to the weekend hackers. He's a little guy who succeeded, and the public always loves that.

CBS hurt itself with poor preparation at

---

## GOLF

1. ABC, McKay and Marr
  2. CBS, Summerall and Venturi
  3. NBC, Scully and Trevino
- 

this year's Masters, when it provided virtually no background information on winner Bernhard Langer, the first West German ever to win a major. And anchorman Summerall's low-key approach is inappropriate to a game as low-key on TV as golf. When Langer clinched the second-most important title in golf, Summerall said, in a flat monotone, "Bernhard Langer is the Masters champion." Pass the No-Doz.

Scully is only fair at golf. He tends to overdramatize, and the prose that works so well on baseball telecasts comes across as flowery and/or stilted on golf. In contrast, there's the humor and charm of analyst Lee Trevino, whose bubbly personality puts him in the class of McGuire and Madden as broadcasting originals. Trevino has a wealth

of good, current anecdotes and an insider's knowledge that he is able to communicate to purists and novices alike. So you get the good and the bad on NBC golf.

BOXING—NBC in a split decision over CBS, with ABC trailing both.

NBC's strength lies in Marv Albert, the best blow-by-blow man in networkland. Its weakness lies in analyst Ferdie Pacheco, who is miscast in his role as interviewer. He tends to ask gratuitous questions, then answer them himself.

As matchmaker and broadcaster, Pacheco's obviously caught in a conflict of interest, or at very least the appearance of a conflict of interest. How can he critique a match he arranged? On the plus side, he's a bright man and has been a tireless public crusader for improved safety measures in boxing.

CBS has a competent blow-by-blow man in Tim Ryan and a superior analyst in Gil Clancy, whose career as a trainer enables him to break down a fight expertly for

---

## BOXING

1. NBC, Albert and Pacheco
  2. CBS, Ryan and Clancy
  3. ABC, Michaels
- 

viewers. The problem with CBS' coverage is the presence of Sugar Ray Leonard, who fights with Clancy for air time. You can watch a fight on NBC and hear silence for 10 seconds. Not on CBS. Silence is golden. Three in the booth is usually one too many.

Michaels is the latest in a long line of ABC fight broadcasters (Jackson, Chris Schenkel, and Cosell preceded him). He needs help from an analyst because his knowledge of boxing is limited. In a prelim before the Hagler-Hearns brawl in April, Michaels referred to a "flash" knockdown of Canadian heavyweight Willie Dewitt, meaning he had been stunned but unhurt. Dewitt was hurt, barely lasting out the round.

TENNIS—The analyst is the key on all three networks because the stroke-by-stroke man in each case defers so strongly to him. All the analysts are excellent—Bud Collins on NBC, John Newcombe and/or Virginia Wade on CBS, and Arthur Ashe on ABC. The pick is the love-him-or-hate-him Collins by a hair.

Purists who prefer the classic British approach to broadcasting tennis—extremely sparse and often no conversation once the ball's in play—detest Collins, who does tend to get hyper and run on at the mouth. But he's very knowledgeable, knows everyone in the game, and gives you good inside stuff, both tactics and personalities. And he's funny, or at least he is to this viewer.

He got off one of the great lines of all time at Wimbledon when the camera zoomed in for a closeup of Princess Anne, who happened to have a royal finger up her royal nose. "Great forehead," Collins deadpanned. It's that dimension that gives him the edge over his competition.

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## TENNIS

1. NBC, Enberg and Collins
  2. CBS, Summerall and Newcombe
  3. ABC, Michaels and Ashe
- 

Having Enberg as his NBC partner is also a plus, because Enberg sets up an analyst as well as anyone in the business. CBS uses Pat Summerall (more No-Doz, please), and ABC uses either Cosell or Michaels for its limited (two tournaments) tennis coverage. For its Tournament of Champions telecast, the Roomies added Donna de Varona to their booth, which would be an inspired move if they played in a swimming pool.

HORSE RACING—ABC has the most and best coverage at the track (especially when Cosell and his pontifications are absent), NBC has come on strongly to place, and CBS shows.

As in golf, ABC's McKay shines in a sport in which he is personally involved (as a thoroughbred owner). As in golf, he sets a scene and develops and follows a story line with eloquence and restraint. And he has an outstanding analyst in Bill Hartack, who makes up in expertise what he lacks in personality. As a jockey, Hartack had the rare reputation of being able to tell a trainer something he didn't know about his horse after just one ride. That knowledge is precious in the tricky job of analyzing the rerun of a race.

NBC impressed everyone with its unique, four-hour, Eclipse Award winning telecast of The Breeders Cup. Enberg is new to horse racing, but he has become enamored of it to the point of buying a horse himself, and shows signs of becoming a budding McKay.

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## HORSE RACING

1. ABC, McKay and Hartack
  2. NBC, Enberg and Axthelm
  3. CBS, Musburger and Wright
- 

But the best thing about NBC's coverage is Pete Axthelm, who addresses the two-dollar bettor with brevity and wit. Ax has won an Eclipse Award as a writer, as well as being part of NBC's winning team.

Musburger is ever the pro for CBS, but he won't give you much beyond general knowledge. Frank Wright's background as a trainer

is both a plus and a minus. He knows his stuff, but talks from a trainer's viewpoint more than the public's. Charlie Cantey is used improperly. She should concentrate more on the racing personalities she knows so well, instead of tactics and strategy.

**AUTO RACING**—CBS takes the checkered flag, with NBC and ABC finishing in a near dead heat behind.

What distinguishes the CBS team of Ken Squier, David Hobbs, Ned Jarrett, Chris Economaki, and Mike Joy is that all of them are involved in motor sports for a living year-round. Squier, for example, owns a small dirt track in Vermont, is president of the Motor Racing Network, which syndicates races for cable companies, and has an extensive background in promoting and broadcasting a wide variety of races. Economaki is editor and publisher of *National Speed Sport News* and worked for ABC for 20 years before joining CBS.

That kind of background gives them and CBS unmatched expertise and credibility.

And CBS gives its team a lot to work with, sparing no expense in the most extensive coverage among the networks. It pioneered and remains the only one to use a muncam inside the car, which captures the speed and danger of the sport and gives its broad-

#### AUTO RACING

1. CBS, Squier, Hobbs, et al.
2. NBC, Page, Bobby Unser, et al.
3. ABC, McKay, Posey, and Stewart

casters a huge leg up on the competition.

NBC's version of Squier is Paul Page, whose annual radio call of the Indianapolis 500 is heard worldwide. He knows everyone in the sport and is liked and trusted, but NBC only televises three races, and one, the Long Beach Grand Prix, is taped.

ABC has the Indy 500, the biggest race of all, and does a frantic but fine job of editing it down to three hours, in time to telecast it that evening. The network relies again on McKay, but he doesn't have the feel for auto racing he does for golf and horse racing. Sam Posey is a plus as an analyst, adding drama to a telecast with his excitability. Jackie Stewart also gets hyper, but when he does, his Scottish brogue thickens to the point of incomprehensibility, and his voice rises to the level at which dogs start howling.

Voices will no doubt rise when this is read. *How could that bozo pick so-and-so over so-and-so?* Lighten up, folks. It's just one bozo's opinion. ■

*Contributing editor BOB RUBIN is rated No. 1 among the raters of the lost art of rating sports broadcasters.*



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CHARCOAL MELLOWED DROP BY DROP



By ALAN STEINBERG

# Dave Stieb: 'Somebody's Got To Be the Best. Why Not Me?'

**H**OW CAN DAVE STIEB BE ONE OF baseball's premier pitchers? What's he doing *pitching*, period? He never pitched anywhere in the known world as a youth. At Oak Grove High School in San Jose, Calif., he punted footballs and threw BBs from the outfield. Even at Southern Illinois University, where he batted .394 and was on *The Sporting News* All-America team as an outfielder, he only pitched a reluctant, "I'll help you out this time, coach," 17½ innings.

The only way to describe what happened next is: "Believe it or not." Can you take a college outfielder to the Toronto Blue Jays' Class A team in May '78 as an outfielder-pitcher (2-0), run him through an instructional league strictly as a pitcher, give him a few months in '79 to show something in Class A (5-0), shoot him straight to Triple-A in Syracuse (5-2), say "Thank you very much," and send him to start against the Baltimore Orioles with all of 128 total innings of minor league experience under his belt? If you *can*, what will a guy like that achieve in just five-and-a-half years while still learning to pitch in the major leagues?

Only this:

- Lowest cumulative ERA in the American League, 1980-84 (3.26).
- Toughest pitcher to hit, 1980-84 (.219 cumulative opposition B.A.).
- American League Pitcher of the Year, 1982.
- American League All-Star, 1980, '81, '83, '84.
- Winning pitcher, 1983 All-Star Game (first American League win in 11 years).
- Second place, American League Cy Young Award vote, 1982.
- Most innings pitched, American League, 1984 (267).
- Toronto Blue Jays all-time leader in wins (81); ERA (3.30); complete games (76); shutouts (18); strikeouts (775).
- Blue Jays Most Valuable Pitcher, 1981-84.

If you're reaching for descriptions, here are some handy ones: "I can't imagine anyone being a better pitcher than Dave Stieb" (Blue Jays manager, Bobby Cox); "He's so good, it's frightening" (Kansas City Royals manager, Dick Howser); "The best pitcher in the American League, possibly in baseball" (too many players, press, and fans to count). Go ahead and throw in "The Real Natural" and "One in a Million" to polish the gilded portrait frame.

Who is this guy? Why don't we hear more about him? Well, we will . . . *now*. For one thing, 28-year-old David Andrew Stieb recently signed a six-year extension to his five-year contract that will net him, including salaries, bonuses, and deferred annuities, as his agent Bob LaMonte says, "more money than all the presidents of the U.S. from Washington through Reagan have been paid." For the record, he'll earn about \$25 million or so through 1995.

For another, he intends to end his career, he notes, as "one of the best." Fiercely competitive, determined, and "obsessed with winning baseball games," Stieb is nevertheless an ambiguous person. Relaxed and soft-spoken up front, there's a volcano roiling below whenever he's tramping around a pitcher's mound. "He's Mr. Intensity," says LaMonte. "If you were any more intense, they'd have to lock you up."

Opposing teams wish someone would lock Stieb up. On occasions, some of his teammates in Toronto, along with puzzled fans, might've had the same wish. During 1982, when he had his best year, Stieb was already embroiled in his third salary dispute. Statements such as "I want to be traded, I just want out of this organization" rocked his boat until he dumped his first agent, who he claimed had given him "really bad advice."

But since then, Stieb has established himself as Toronto's guiding light out of baseball. "I've got a lot to prove," he insists, "and so does this team."

**INSIDE SPORTS:** Why have you generally been regarded as remote, hard to reach, a tough interview?

**DAVE STIEB:** Maybe that's a recent thing because I just got too much exposure and I got tired of talking about my private life. I bore myself. And it was like the Michael Jackson thing. You just heard enough about the guy—leave it alone, everybody's tired of him. I don't want to be isolated, but then again, I don't enjoy having everything I do viewed under a microscope. Maybe people don't realize how that can affect you.

**IS:** See if you can express it.

**DS:** Well, my first few years in Toronto I pitched well, but I didn't get any notoriety. I didn't care at the time, I didn't want publicity. Then all of a sudden, it just came and came—and it got out of hand. After a while I began to feel I wasn't a person anymore. You'd walk into malls, people would stare at you. All they saw was a baseball player. "Wow, that's Dave Stieb, the baseball player." That got to be such a turn-off for me. I remember when I was just a guy in college playing baseball—walk down the street, nobody noticed you. A normal person. I could do things without people judging me for it or writing about it.

**IS:** Haven't you come to terms with your notoriety yet?

**DS:** Somewhat. But I still have my moods. I always said I'd never want to be like Reggie Jackson and Pete Rose. They could go to Nairobi and people would know who they are. I never want to be like that.

**IS:** What about your reported impatience on the mound with teammates' errors or lack of effort, umpires' calls, things like that?

**DS:** [Smiles knowingly] I'm sure you've heard about how I used to glare at players, crap like that. I *did* do it a couple of times. That was years ago. Hey, you can glare at me

**To Stieb, the worst aspect of pitching is being dependent on the performance of teammates.**







**'I'd like to be in the history books with Carlton and Seaver.'**

all you want if I throw a home run pitch. I deserve it, probably. And I'll be the first one to tell you, "Yeah, it was a stupid pitch." And I used to glare at umpires to get a call. I'd get the ball back and look at the umpire and my eyes were saying, "How the hell can that be a ball?" That's what I'd be thinking and that's exactly what I wanted them to *know* I was thinking. It's hard for me to be emotionless out there. It's just the way I am. It's a release for me—I need to get it out.

**IS:** When you're pitching, your intensity is obvious. Why always so intense out there?

**DS:** I take baseball very seriously. Remember, I started out as an outfielder who was pretty good at that position, and I was also having good success as a hitter. Well, all of a sudden I was pitching, and as a pitcher, I suddenly realized that the outcome of a ball game was totally out of my hands. Once you let go of the ball, for instance, there's nothing

you can do about where this guy's gonna hit it. And then, once he hits it, it's still up to somebody else to make a play. And in order for you to win, it's up to the other guys on your team to drive in the runs for you.

**IS:** What you're saying is that you had to change your perspective as a ballplayer.

**DS:** Oh yeah. That was a difficult adjustment for me at first. When I first started pitching, I wanted success so badly; I wanted to win and to see everything go right. And then I saw all the adverse conditions of success and I felt dependent on everybody else. As an outfielder, I'd always told myself "Any ball that comes my way, I'm catching it." I'm diving or whatever it takes to catch it." But then I was pitching and I'd see plays that maybe a guy could've made with a better effort, if he'd have gone all out for the ball. Some guys just don't think they can make a certain play, whereas I always think you

never know what you can do until you try it. I can understand not diving on artificial turf. But, you know, on grass fields, God, to me that's the best play ever—to make a diving catch. And why some players won't attempt to do that is just beyond me.

**IS:** As a pitcher, you feel frustrated that another player might cost you a win?

**DS:** Frustrated, yeah. Because everything anybody does out there reflects on you.

**IS:** You mean the way *you* view Dave Stieb or the way the fans and press view Dave Stieb?

**DS:** I'm talking internally. It's one thing if, say, you have a guy on third and two outs and a ball just eludes a fielder. But say he had a chance of catching it and didn't even try. Well, tomorrow it's gonna be in the papers that *you* lost that game. It's gonna show *your* name with an "L" by it. People who didn't see the game or read about it are just gonna see that you lost the game.

**IS:** You're a purist as an athlete?

**DS:** Yeah, perfectionist.

**IS:** But isn't there a fine line in this sort of thinking? Do you, for instance, go off the mound thinking, "Sonovabitch, I'm gonna get a loss in the papers" or "Sonovabitch, I deserved to win?"

**DS:** No, it isn't "a loss in the papers"—it's just "loss" or "got the loss." I mean, everybody else on your team loses, too, but it always goes on the *pitcher's* record.

**IS:** Isn't it enough, win or lose, to simply know within yourself that you deserved to win, that you did your best?

**DS:** That's fine and dandy, but, you know, you want to go one step further.

**IS:** What's one step further?

**DS:** To have the *success!* I mean, to hit the ball 380 feet, yeah, that's fine, you did a great job. *But . . .* if it had gone in for a hit, that would've been even better. I'm a perfectionist, I wanna take it one step further.

**IS:** Don't you think most professional athletes feel that way?

**DS:** To some degree. I know there's some guys here who don't really care what happens as long as they stay here one more day, one more week. I don't think like that. I'm always thinking careerwise.

**IS:** Let's touch on that. What is your career goal?

**DS:** I would like to win 300 games. But I can see where that's probably not gonna happen. I've got 82 now—how many do I need, 218? Even if I won 20 games the next 10 years straight, that's still only 200. I don't see myself winning 20 for 10 straight years, though. That's why every win is so important to me. I started off on a team that wasn't that good and I've won 82 games, but I'm still nearly a .500 pitcher [82-69]. And I'm way, way better than that. If I'd have played those early years with, say, a Baltimore, like some



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other guys have who haven't played as long as me but already have as many wins as I do, I'd have more wins. So now I look at every close game that I could've won but didn't, for whatever reason, and it's like you can never make that up.

**IS:** So you're already thinking about the history books?

**DS:** It's not primary, I don't dwell on it. But my whole life right now is baseball. And I see these other pitchers, like Carlton and Seaver, that've been pitching so long and they're gonna be in the history books. And that's where I would like to be.

**IS:** It's been said that Dave Stieb is cocky on the mound—arrogant and conceited. Is there truth to that?

**DS:** [Smiling, shaking his head] No, no, I'm not conceited or cocky. I'm confident. Maybe that makes me look arrogant, I don't know. I'm just confident that I'm good and that I'm gonna win.

**IS:** You've said that you're better than your record shows.

**DS:** I *am* better than my record shows. Just recently, there was a news report saying, essentially, that Dave Stieb has never really had the statistics to support the contention that he is one of the best pitchers in baseball. It was like, "He's never really had that one great year to establish that he is a great pitcher."

**IS:** And your response to that is . . . ?

**DS:** I *want* that. I *wanna* have that great year—that year I'm capable of having.

**IS:** Why haven't you had at least one already?

**DS:** I don't know. I've just never had one of those years where everything goes right. Last year, 16-8, the two years before that, 17-14 and 17-12—and I could've easily won 20 games in two of those three years. Does that sound like sour grapes? I hope not, because it isn't.

**IS:** But doesn't it satisfy you to know that you could've won 20 games those years?

**DS:** No, not at all!

**IS:** You want the numbers?

**DS:** Yeah, I want the numbers. I want to be the best. I believe I am, but some people just have to see numbers for proof. That's why I want them, I guess. It was like last year. Guy like Boddicker wins 20 games. You start to hear, "Boddicker's the only 20-game winner in the American League and only two guys won 20 in the National League . . ." Well, I could've been one of those guys.

**IS:** But you weren't because . . . ?

**DS:** Because I had just a few games where things got turned around after I was outta the game—we didn't get the right breaks and I didn't get a win as a result. Those are the things that stop you from winning 20 games, from putting the numbers on the board. *Frustrating.*

**IS:** Have you learned to put that frustration behind you now?

**DS:** For the most part, yeah. But when those games were played, I was thinking, "I should've had a *win!*" I mean, hey, those things didn't happen to Boddicker!

**IS:** Maybe. But Boddicker didn't just sign a \$25 million contract like Dave Stieb, either.

**DS:** [Laughing] Oh, I don't care! The thing is, this guy, he's only played a few years.

**IS:** So, what are you saying?

**DS:** I'm just saying, you know, "Where's mine?"

**IS:** When you made the jump from A-ball to Triple-A to the Blue Jays all in one year, wasn't that a tough adjustment?

**DS:** No—and that's what was so amazing. I was able to handle it because I never expected to be there. I got there, it was like, "I can't believe this." I never thought about the major leagues seriously, because I didn't think I could make it. When I got up here, I was nervous and intimidated by other players, but I also knew that if I didn't do well it wouldn't be that bad, because I was still learning how to pitch. I was thinking, "The team's not so good, we're expected to lose, but if we win, that's great." This took a lot of pressure off me. I realized that I'd only pitched 128 innings—how could they expect me to come up here and blow these guys away? Yet, I had success. I played half a year in '79 on the Blue Jays and I was 8-8. The next best pitcher was there for the whole year and was 9-16. That right there told me, "Hey, I did good here."

**IS:** Did you think, even at that time, "I can do better"?

**DS:** Oh, I *knew* I could do better. I was pitching scared that first half-year. I was still telling myself: "I'm not even a *pitcher!* And here I am, winning in the major leagues!"

**IS:** And yet, throughout your big-league career you've always had the reputation of being this relentless, humorless, steely-minded pitcher.

**DS:** [Grinning and nodding] That's what I've heard.

**IS:** You're amused. Is it all just an image you try to convey consciously?

**DS:** No, it's very unconscious. I have no idea why people view me that way.

**IS:** How do you view yourself as a pitcher?

**DS:** I don't know, I never thought about that. See, I know what's going on out on the mound, but I can only guess at what other players are seeing.

**IS:** What do you imagine they're thinking when they bat against you?

**DS:** "This guy's just gonna be trying to blow me away. He's gonna try to throw the ball by me." But that would apply more for 1980, '81, '82. Over the past few years I've learned to throw a curveball, change-up, how to take speeds off my fastball—and I've still got the

fastball and the nasty slider. I think it's more difficult to hit off me now.

**IS:** Do you still get the big charge out of striking guys out?

**DS:** Not so much anymore. I can get two strikes on 'em so easy, but it's harder for me to strike them out now because they know I'm gonna try to throw something hard. I'm not gonna strike a guy out on a change-up. Doyle Alexander will do that, but it's just not me. I don't wanna lose on something that's not my best pitch. The other day, I threw something off-speed when I had a guy oh-two and he hit it for a home run.

**IS:** So you are trying to vary your repertoire, to get away from just the heat?

**DS:** Yeah, but I'm telling you, it's against my better judgment. I'm just known as a power pitcher and I take pride in that. I like challenging them. I don't want them going back to the dugout saying: "That pansy. He's afraid to throw me something hard." I want them walking away going: "Whew. He gave me his best shot—he didn't try to fool me. He just said, 'Here it is. See if you can hit it.'"

**IS:** Who gives you trouble at the plate?

**DS:** Nobody. There's no one guy that always hits me. I always mention George Brett. He's such a disciplined hitter. He waits back there and he sees the ball so good.

**IS:** You've faced Pete Rose in spring training games. What was it like for you to face one of the game's all-time finest hitters?

**DS:** I got off on pitching to him a few times. I remember one time I wanted the chance to really work him. I didn't want him to just get up there and hit the first pitch and he's done. But that's what he did. First time up, he hit the first or second pitch and the next time up he did it again. Then, his third time up he got a hit off the first pitch, and I went like this [throws arms up in disgust]. And Rose gets on first base and says to me, "I got 2,000 of those." I think he misinterpreted what I meant by it. I was trying to say, "I want to *work* you! C'mon, I wanna *pitch* to you!"

**IS:** Do you feel that way about any other hitters?

**DS:** I feel the same way about Reggie Jackson. Always have. Even though I never really followed baseball as a kid—never read boxscores, didn't know what team was in what league—I was definitely aware of who he was. And when I pitch to him, it's like: "This is major league baseball right here. This is the epitome." Every time I pitch to him, I savor it. My biggest obsession, in fact, was to strike out Reggie Jackson. From Day One. The first couple of years, I didn't strike him out. I remember one time in Anaheim before a game, I went up to him and said, "You know, Reggie, I haven't struck you out yet." And he said the greatest thing to me. He smiled and said: "Don't worry. Maybe today." I was shocked. I didn't expect him to

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say anything like that. And I *did* strike him out that day—and about seven times since. I love facing great hitters like that.

**IS:** Now that you've been around awhile, is your pitching psychology any different from when you started?

**DS:** Well, I don't think I throw the fastball as fast as I used to, so I've started using my head a little more. I've learned to pitch better by changing speeds more often and mixing pitches. But, really, I've always applied the simplest reasoning in order to help me win. My job is to throw strikes, get guys out, and not let 'em score—and I'll win. I used to be obsessed with complete games, but not anymore.

**IS:** If you're flawed as a pitcher, what would you say is your major flaw?

**DS:** That's changed over the years. Used to be walking guys, then giving up home runs, then chink hits.

**IS:** Well, how did you try to prevent, say, walks?

**DS:** I tried to improve my walk-to-strikeout ratio. That's a result of my grandfather always getting on me for walking guys. He lived in Anaheim—he passed away last year before the All-Star Game—and he'd always say, "Ah, you walked too many guys." He didn't care about anything else. And he was right. So I tried to cut them down.

**IS:** By doing what, exactly?

**DS:** When I'd get three balls on a guy, I'd just lay it in there. I'd rather have him hit a shot than walk. But now I don't like doing that. I just don't want to give in like that anymore. And I don't wanna put it right down the middle so they can hit bullets back at me, either. So now I throw that offspeed fastball a lot. When it's two-oh, three-oh, three-one, they're looking for my fastball, and there's nothing better than seeing a guy swing so hard and the ball's not even there. That's what I'm getting off on this year. But mostly I just pitch according to situations. That's why I don't study hitters. I don't care what they hit, what they don't hit. I'm gonna throw what's working for me that day and what the situation calls for. I don't care if you're a good low fastball hitter, because that's where a fastball should be. I'll throw it and we're just gonna have to see who's better.

**IS:** What if you go bad? What if, one day, you develop the Steve Blass syndrome and start bouncing balls up to the plate?

**DS:** No, I can't do that. Won't happen. I won't let it happen. I can pitch a bad game, yeah—but I'm not gonna go consistently bad.

**IS:** Let's talk about your new contract. Has it changed you in any way?

**DS:** No. The money is just security, it doesn't change my attitude toward anything. I feel secure, I know that I'm set monetarily, but there's more to life than just that.

**IS:** Cutting this kind of "fat" contract wasn't a result of your hassles with your agents and the bitterness you'd once expressed toward the Blue Jay organization during your salary disputes? You weren't purposely going for the throat to pay them back?

**DS:** No, uh-uh. I had four years left on my six-year contract and I said I would never renegotiate that contract, that I would live with those terms. And I did. I signed an *extension*. Maybe people don't realize that. I didn't coerce anybody, I didn't renegotiate my contract. I'm still playing according to the contract I originally signed. They wanted me to sign an extension. The club confronted me, I never went to them. I'm flattered that they did—it really impressed me.

**IS:** Are you worth the estimated \$25 million they're paying you?

**DS:** I have to believe I am, yeah. I've always felt that the money they pay you is a reflection of how good you are and how much they value your ability. I wanted to know that the ballclub regarded me with the same respect as I regarded myself, and as others do, too. Especially considering what I went through those first few years when my agent, Steve Comte, kept telling me: "The Blue Jays don't want to pay you what you deserve. They don't think you're worth it." I could've come away from that very messed up. My reputation was getting the works in the press, too.

**IS:** Maybe we should try to clear up the major misunderstandings about that.

**DS:** Good. I like that idea. In 1979 I signed with the Blue Jays for half the minimum, \$19,000, because I only played half a year. Comte approached me and wanted to represent me, so I said OK. What I didn't learn until later was that he was out to make as much money off me as he could. Anyway, in '80 he told the club I wanted about \$80,000. I'd have been glad if he asked for 50. They couldn't agree, so Comte made me hold out and report late to spring training—and I didn't even know I could do that. Finally, the club just said, "We'll give him \$55,000, that's it." So he didn't even get me that—they just renewed me. Meantime, Comte kept feeding me negative stuff about the club. One time, he had me sit in the stands with him while he talked to Pat Gillick [the Toronto's vice president for baseball operations] and Peter Bavasi [club president], because he wanted me to hear them say I was just a half-year man, I wasn't worth \$80,000 yet. I heard it, but they were right. I *wasn't* worth it yet. But Comte kept telling me they were cheap and I deserved it. I believed him because I trusted him to give me good advice. In '81, the club wanted to pay me around \$70,000, but Comte asked for something like \$100-110,000. So I held out again, and again they just renewed me, this time at 85. That was a lot of money and I was happy.

**IS:** But your reputation was being tarnished?

**DS:** Oh, severely. Everybody's saying, "Well, all Stieb wants is money." That's what it looked like and that's what I probably portrayed to them at the time, because I believed what my agent was feeding me.

**IS:** So you got angry with the club?

**DS:** Yeah. 'Cause Comte would come back and say: "They don't want to pay you what you deserve. They're cheap, they don't value you." I bought all that and I took it personally. I thought they were screwing me. And the press enjoyed raising the issue all season. Like a dummy, I supplied them with what they wanted. Lack of maturity. I said a lot of things I regret and I know that some of my teammates didn't particularly like what I was doing. Then, after I lost in arbitration in '82, Comte told me I should demand to be traded. I figured, "Well, sure, I guess that's what I should do," even though I was very happy with the \$250,000 I was making then. When reporters asked how I felt about losing, I said, "I can't believe we lost," because Comte had assured me we had a strong case and that we'd win. But in the same breath, I also said publicly: "I'm very happy with \$250,000. That's good money." Not long after that, I told Comte I was thinking about getting somebody else to represent me. He was totally shocked. He shouldn't have been—he gave me bad advice all the way down the line.

**IS:** How are you regarded in Toronto these days?

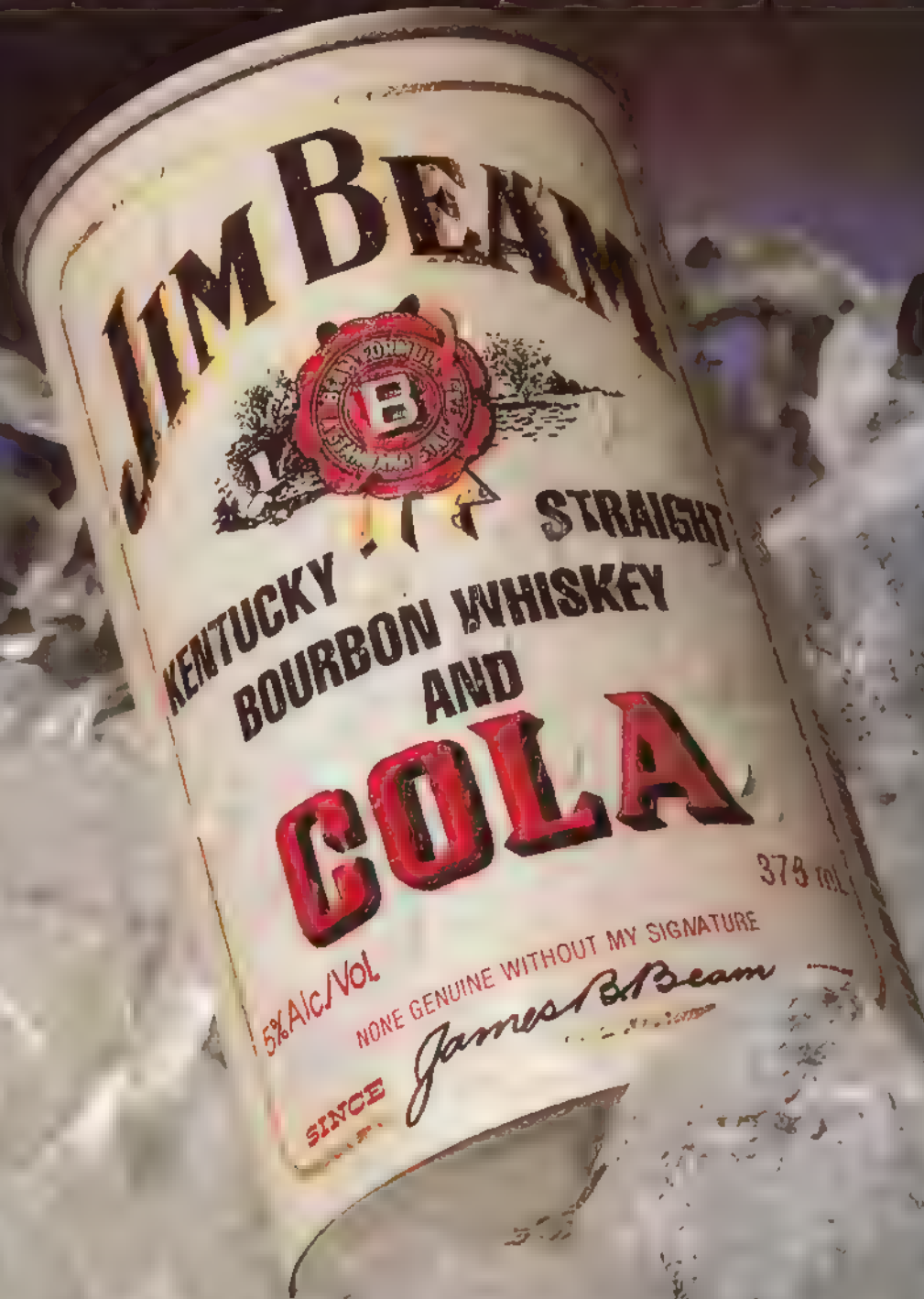
**DS:** I'm treated very well. I think people realize baseball's a business and athletes have to get paid. But I've matured a lot and I'm always trying to improve my relations with the press. You can't fault a guy who's trying, can you?

**IS:** But you're still obsessed with being the best, isn't that true?

**DS:** Sure, but it's not something that's ruling my life. It's a personal goal, but it's also a reflection of the team. I'm obviously only gonna be as good as the guys I play with. But, yeah, I'm obsessed with being the best. And I want the statistics to show that. The bottom line is this: When you've got a lot of athletes playing in a game—and this goes for kids in the schoolyards as well as pros—it doesn't matter how good the whole group is, one of 'em is gonna be the best. So the way I look at it, somebody's gotta be the best on the Toronto Blue Jays, somebody's gotta be the best in our league, somebody's gotta be the best in major league baseball. Why not Dave Stieb? ■

*Contributing writer ALAN STEINBERG asked himself this same question as a kid, but there were too many "because's." Alan's last I.S. piece was on Don Murdoch.*

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## SPECIAL FEATURE

**PRO FOOTBALL '85**

# RATINGS and Inside Stuff

**By Allen Barra**  
with George Ignatin

OK, OK, you love the passing game—Marino and Montana and Bartkowski and Lomax dropping back on every play to fire the ball downfield. Sure, few sports matchups are more exciting than a talented receiver facing down a daring defensive back, like Denver's Steve Watson against the Raiders' Lester Hayes [opposite].

But in today's pro game is "the bomb" losing meaning? Has the thrill gone out of the long game?

This 24-page feature explores the impact wide-open passing has had on the NFL—for good and bad. And we rank the coaches, the QBs, the defenses—and also Poke some fun



# RATINGS

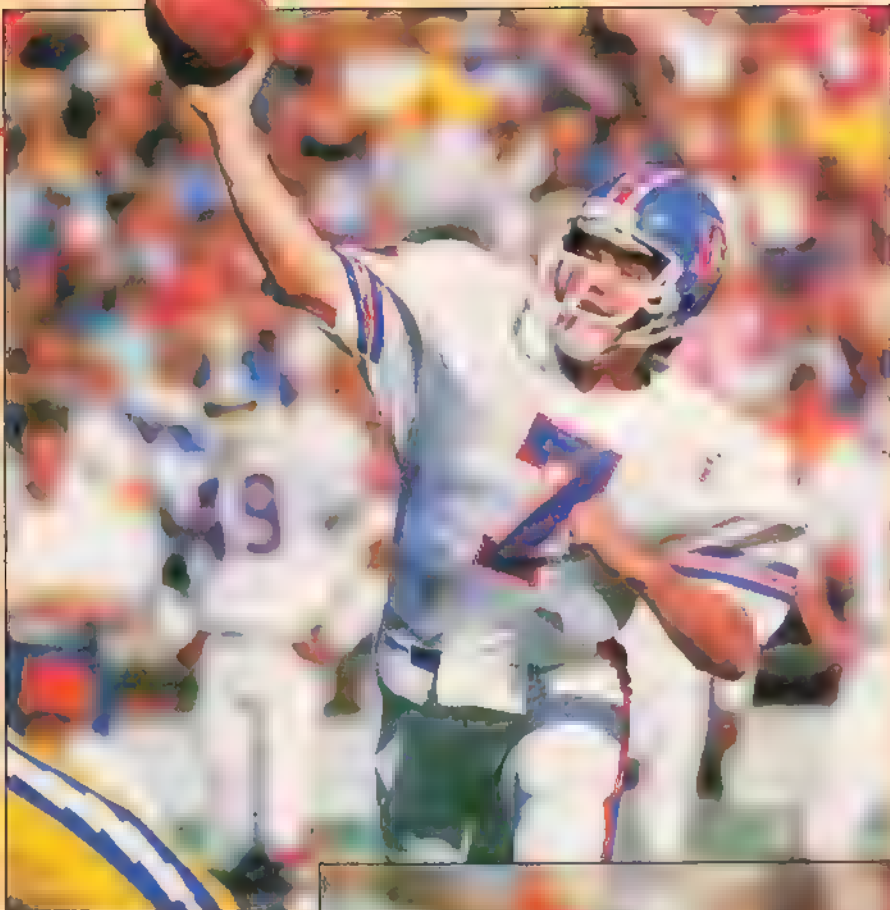
## and Inside Stuff

**A** SIGNIFICANT NUMBER OF football fans probably think Notre Dame invented the forward pass. They don't so much remember having *heard* that as *seen* it, for which we have Hollywood to blame. The scene isn't from "Knut Rockne, All American" (though that movie sort of suggests it)—it's from John Ford's movie about West Point, "The Long Gray Line." You'll remember it if you try hard: Tyrone Power plays Marty Mahrs, the Irish-born career sergeant at the U.S. Military Academy. He's on the sidelines on the historic Saturday afternoon of November 1, 1913, tending to the Cadet bench, and his voice-over says, "And then there was that fateful day we played that little Catholic school from the Midwest. . . ." Marty's father, speaking in a brogue thicker than a keg of year-old Guinness, slyly asks the commandant, "Are ye a bettin' man, general?"

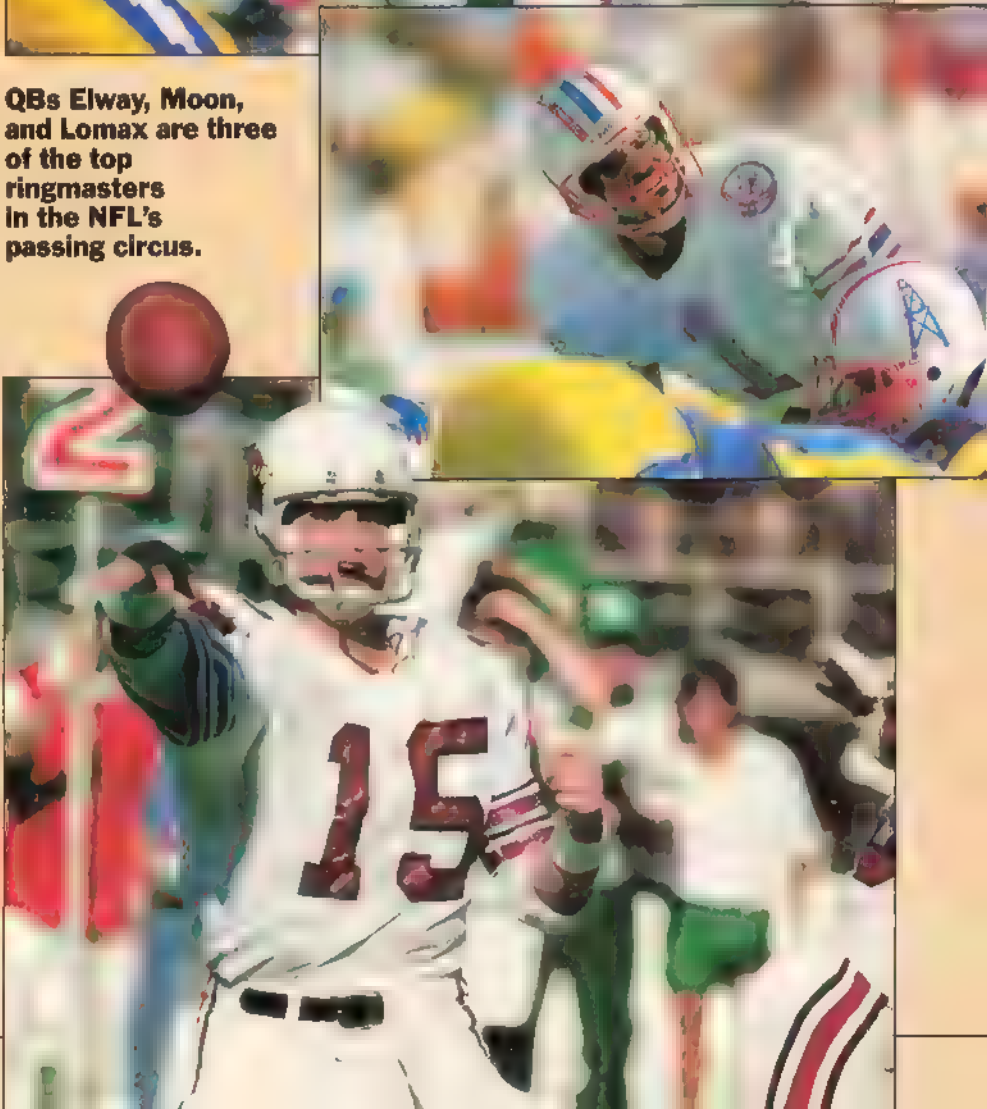
Anyway, the actor playing Notre Dame quarterback Gus Dorais starts into the line and then, suddenly, fades back about 10 yards into the backfield. The camera cuts to a row of startled Army faces—is this guy nuts? Is he running away?? The actor then flings the kind of pass that only goes for a touchdown in Hollywood, and an actor playing—Knut Rockne??!! gathers it in for a long score.

Chaos ensues! Army players and coaches run out on the field, screaming at the referees. The beleaguered refs decide, finally, that the play stands because, after all, there's nothing in the rules specifically *against* it. Bewildered and demoralized, the powerful Cadets go down to a crushing defeat. In the locker room, Ward Bond tells his troops, "Men, we encountered a new kind of football out there today. . . ." As Tyrone's Marty leaves the locker room, he meets his father, who is really cleaning up—as it turns out, he even had a bet with his own son. "Let that be a lesson to you," the father admonishes as he stashes the bills in his vest. "Never bet against Holy Mother Church!"

**N**EEDESS TO SAY, IT DIDN'T quite happen that way. The forward pass had already been legal for six years before the first Notre Dame-Army game and just in time, too, considering the almost unbelievable violence of grind-it-out football in the early 1900s (Teddy Roosevelt, not exactly your average liberal wimp politician, threatened to ban it). Even



**QBs Elway, Moon, and Lomax are three of the top ringmasters in the NFL's passing circus.**



## Walsh vs. Shula? We'll Take Bill

### Don Shula, Dolphins

Can you name another coach who has adapted so well to changes in pro football over the years? Landry has brought different teams to the Super Bowl, but they were the product of an organization that always stressed continuity. When Shula took the Colts to the Super Bowl after the '68 season, a lot of people assumed that the team was simply so good there was no way a coach could miss with it. Well, Shula's Miami Super Bowl teams have



**Shula adjusted to the new rules favoring the offense.**

gone through three complete rebuilding jobs: Consider the change from the grind-it-out Csonka-Kick teams of '72-'73 to last year's mad bombers. In fact, consider the difference between last year's Dolphins and the Super Bowl team that lost to the Redskins three years ago—did any team in the high-powered passing era have less of a right to be playing in a Super Bowl than that team? A super coaching job.

Shula was one of the first coaches to realize how completely the new rules would change the game, and adjust accordingly. It's easy to say, in retrospect, that any team can win with Marino behind a team of sumo wrestlers, pitching to Clayton and Duper; but how many people really thought Marino was *that* good after his senior year at Pitt? He may throw bombs, but the kid's not exactly a rocket scientist upstairs. Shula took the Dolphins to the Super Bowl with . . . well, that proves our point: We can't even remember *who* the Miami quarterback was in '82! Allowing Shula to have Marino and the two Marks is almost unfair.

### Bill Walsh, 49ers

Don Shula is the premier strategist in pro ball, and is entitled to be put at the top of the list in any discussion of NFL coaches. But what we suspect—and have since 1981—is that Bill Walsh is the best coach in the game, that he encompasses all the talents of a great strategist (like Shula) and a great tactician (unlike Shula), and that soon he'll firmly establish his reputation on a level with Paul Brown's and Vince Lombardi's and Shula's.

Remember the second Miami possession in the Super Bowl? You ought to, since it led to the Dolphins' only TD. Marino hit on five consecutive passes for 66 yards, and it looked indeed like the much-anticipated shooting match was on. But it wasn't. The next half-hour after that touchdown pointed out the difference between the two coaches. Shula would have assumed that his defense failed through lack of effort, or failure to adhere to the game plan, and simply ordered them to press harder; Walsh assumed that his defense failed because Marino was too good for the kind of defense the 49ers were using, and made adjustments in coverage. On the next three Miami possessions, while Montana was blowing the Dolphin defense away with three TDs, Marino completed just one of six passes for no first downs. For all intents and purposes, the Super Bowl was over after the Miami touchdown. That's an incredible statement, but it's true.

Walsh's teams play as if he had written the book on the modern game. Moreover, they often look as if they were writing it on the spot, improvising with a dazzling brilliance, and at the same time always playing within the framework of an intelligently conceived plan that allows for every contingency. We don't know if Walsh is a student of the British military historian B. H. Liddell Hart and his doctrine of the "Indirect Method," but have you ever noticed how often in key situations the guy with the ball for San Francisco seems to be going in the opposite direction from the people who are chasing him? Start watching for it this year and you'll get a much clearer idea of how this coach is different from all other coaches.

## Coaches We Like

### Chuck Noll, Steelers

He has proven to be a much more adaptable coach than anyone gave him credit for when the Steelers were tearing up the league—and if you think about it, he had started to adapt earlier than that, because his last Super Bowl team had lost quite a bit of power from the '78 model. Last year he defied the old football



**Walsh deserves a salute for being a tactical genius.**

cliché and made chicken salad out of a team without chickens.

### Chuck Knox, Seahawks

He has never had overwhelming talent to work with (more like whelming talent, we'd say), and has demonstrated an undeniable ability to get the most out of it. Some fans and press criticize him because his teams are "boring"; we thought the purpose of coaching a football team was to win games, not to be featured on "Entertainment Tonight."

### Tom Landry, Cowboys

Yes, Tom Landry. No, we don't much like him either. So what? He has proved to be one of the most adaptable coaches in football, innovative in everything except his wardrobe. Curiously, he got the most flak of his career when he was doing some of his best coaching, and if you don't agree with us, please tell us what *you* think held the Cowboys together last year. Two things about Landry: People are saying that his record in big games isn't very good—they're right, but it never was. Neither is Shula's (neither was Earl Weaver's).

### Bud Grant, Vikings

For years, people were asking how Grant's teams could play so lousy in the Super Bowl when what they should have been asking was how the hell he got them in there in the first place. It's a sorry state of affairs when a guy has to take a year off and go hunting in order to make people realize what a good coach he was. We'd choose the Vikes for our list of teams likely to improve, but that would be too easy: They sure couldn't get any worse.

—A. B.



# RATINGS

## and Inside Stuff

Army threw one now and again (Gus Dorais himself snuffed out an Army scoring threat by picking one off). But despite Hollywood's best efforts, the points the scene makes survive the exaggeration, and the points hold as true today as they did on that "fateful day" in 1913: (1) A good passing attack is the fastest way to equalize two otherwise unequal teams, and (2) as Marty's dad implied, and to paraphrase Napoleon, God is on the side with the best quarterback.

The value of the quarterback in football is out of proportion to any player in any other position in sports. For a comparable effect in baseball, think of Dwight Gooden starting every game for the New York Mets. That's one reason so many longtime fans of football are dismayed at the increasing effect that the 1978 passing rules (no chucking receivers five yards off the ball, allowing offensive linemen to extend their arms in a block—thus further blurring the distinction between blocking and holding) have had on the game. (See accompanying box, "Passing Fads and Passing Frenzy," on page 44.)

It took NFL offensive coordinators a cou-

ple of years to wise up to the new rules, but by 1981 the number of passes attempted shot up to an incredible 14,180, a new NFL record, with yardage and TD totals to match. For the next two years things leveled off a bit, and there was evidence that defenses might be on the verge of catching up, but last year the number of passing attempts climbed again, to 14,325 (an average of 32 passes per team per game). That's an increase of more than one-third in the number of passes thrown per game over the league average 10 years ago.

If nothing else can be proven conclusively from these figures, it's obvious that pro football games are much longer than they were before the rule changes; every time the ball hits the turf the clock stops. Since teams that fall behind late do almost nothing but pass, the fourth quarters of many pro football games last season dragged on like the last five minutes of basketball games without shot clocks. Of all the explanations as to why football is losing viewers, this could be the least obvious and the most basic: Games are just too damn long, as much as 45 minutes

longer, by one estimate, than before the rule changes. We keep hearing that the average fan likes the new passing game; so if he's watching fewer games than before, the explanation might be that he doesn't have as much time to watch football anymore, not at seven hours a crack for doubleheaders, anyway.

The colleges, too, liberalized their passing rules in 1980, probably to create more "excitement" for the average viewer and thus keep pace with the NFL, and, perhaps, to accommodate the blue-chip prospects who play big-college ball with their eye toward a pro career (no wonder pro football doesn't need a minor league system).

Nonetheless, the commentators who kept telling us that the combination of NCAA recruiting changes and passing rules changes has created "parity" in the ranks of NCAA major college powers aren't seeing the whole picture. It's true that the "30-90" rule (no more than 30 scholarship athletes in one year, no more than 90 on a team at one time) has evened things out since the early '70s, making it virtually impossible to stock-

## The AFC West: Where Defense Is Best

Here are our top five defenses of last year. This is subjective, and a couple of the placements are open to debate. But we don't back down on the teams.

**1. San Francisco.** Awww, c'mon, we can hear you saying. All this pseudoscientific claptrap and you end up picking the 49ers for a little thing like allowing the fewest points (227) in the NFL? To be honest, we don't know what the relationship between offense and defense is, not exactly anyway, and we're not sure how much having a good offense helps the 49ers defense, except to say that, like chicken soup, it doesn't hurt.

Actually it may hurt on paper. Our observation concerning this remarkable defense is that because the offense usually put the 49ers so far ahead early, the defense played a kind of disguised prevent, which let the other team's offense run the clock down on itself without getting big gains—the reason, probably, why the 49ers look so lousy against the run on paper (19th by our method, allowing 2.95 yards per rush).

For us, two games last year sum up the 49ers defense. The first was that Monday night laffer against the Giants, when the 49ers got ahead early, 21-0, then coasted; by the end of the game you could hardly tell from the stats

who had won. The other game? Oh yeah, it was the Super Bowl.

**2. Seattle.** We'll entertain arguments about putting the Seahawks ahead of the 49ers. They were fifth in points allowed and more than made up for that in points they set up for the offense. They led the league in fumbles recovered, sacked the QB 55 times to tie for the sixth spot, were third best in the league in our (adjusted) run defense, and gave up the lowest number of yards per pass (adjusted) in the NFL. It adds up.

**3. Denver.** The Broncos were second in the league in points allowed, fifth in sacks, second toughest (adjusted) team to run against—permitting only about 1.6 yards per try. Only 11th in fewest (adjusted) yards per pass, they made opponents pay for the effrontery in interceptions. Denver was a good example, incidentally, of how an offense can help a defense out by simply not making mistakes: The Broncos did not have the overpowering performance they were hoping for from Elway, but at least he didn't throw that many interceptions (15). The Broncos had the second highest interceptions-made-to-interceptions-thrown ratio (1.8 to 1) in the NFL.

**4. Chicago.** The Bears offense helped them out more than you might have thought.

The first requirement of a ball-control team is, well, to control the ball. Bear QBs were a bunch of sickies, but they threw only 15 interceptions, and the result is that Chicago was fifth in interceptions-made-to-interceptions-thrown ratio, 1.40 to 1. They led the league in sacks and were third in total points allowed. Surprise stat: The Bears caused the highest C.O.F.G.H.S. (Causing Opponents To Fear Getting Head Stomped) factor in the NFL.

**5. L.A. Raiders.** About time these guys showed up *somewhere*, doncha' think? They couldn't run or throw too well last year, but played some not-so-bad defense. They were third in the league in sacks, had the fifth-lowest (adjusted) yards-per-pass average (3.0), and had the 10th lowest (adjusted) yards per run. They lost out to the Bears in C.O.F.G.H.S. factor, but led the league for the third straight year in A.B.S.A.T. (Amount of Brains Splattered on Artificial Turf).

Oh, yes, people ask us: How can the Seahawks, Broncos, Bears, and Raiders also be so effective against the run if, as we contend, they win so much because they're effective at stopping the pass? We fed the problem to our computer and it came up with an answer we endorse: because they're good.

pile talent as leading powers once did. It's also true that the opening up of the passing game has led to what *Village Voice* writer Sebastian Dangerfield calls "The Basketball Effect" on football, i.e., a team needs fewer good recruits to turn its program around.

But the idea of greater parity in college football—and by that we mean the ability of bad-to-mediocre teams to compete with the traditional powers—is also partly an illusion based on scheduling: Because of the lure of TV money, more of the old-time powerhouses now play one another a lot more than they used to. For instance, prior to 1976 Alabama and Notre Dame, two of the most storied schools in college football, had never played each other during the regular season; since then, they've met twice in nationally televised games. Ditto for Alabama-Penn State, who have now played each other for four consecutive seasons. Southern Cal, which always plays Notre Dame, has opened up its schedule in recent years to the likes of Alabama, LSU, and Oklahoma. Notre Dame and Penn State, both criticized in the late '60s and early '70s for lightweight schedules,

now play killer ones, beefed up by playing each other every year since 1981.

In other words, the situation that occurred in 1973, when no less than six schools (Alabama, Oklahoma, Notre Dame, Michigan, Penn State, and Ohio State) went into bowls undefeated and seeking a No. 1 ranking—or even the 1977 season, which after the bowl games had Texas, Notre Dame, Alabama, Arkansas, and Penn State all sporting 11-1 records and claiming to be No. 1—would be highly unlikely today even if the 30-90 rule weren't in effect. For all we know, BYU may be the best team in college ball, but before we hear more talk of how the BYUs have supplanted the Alabamas, Penn States, Notre Dames, and Southern Cals, we would have them try on for size the schedules of those schools for two or three years.

Certainly there is evidence that passing is more prevalent in college ball—passing yards have gone up almost 140 yards a game in the last 10 years—but the conclusion that this has led to parity or even that passing has overtaken running in college football is problematic at best. A quick glance at some of the

highly ranked teams last year reveals that only three teams—Boston College, Brigham Young, and Miami—had overwhelming air attacks. Of the three, BYU didn't play a tough schedule; Miami played well, but suffered from what Sebastian Dangerfield calls the "Fenway Park Effect," meaning that their offensive stats look great, until you put them in perspective by seeing how many points their opponents scored against them. BC? Well, they had Doug Flutie, and Doug Flutie may be an exception to every rule ever written. As for the pass vs. run debate, it simply doesn't exist in college ball. Every coach wants a balanced attack with a great passer, but if you have to pick one, pick the run, and if someone tells you that it's too difficult to recruit for strong rushing attacks, ask them how Army became the surprise team of 1984. Running will get you through times of no passing easier than passing will carry you through times of no running. But pick a weak schedule over either.

*Continued on page 34*



**Miami's Killer Bees defense swarmed, then broke at a crucial time.**



# RATINGS

## and Inside Stuff

### Who's Better— Marino Or Montana?

We eat, sleep, and dream statistics; we honestly feel that most of the world's serious problems could be solved, or at least improved, by more statistics, and that the only problems caused by statistics could be solved by statistics that shed more light on previous statistics. That's why we're happy to announce that we've come up with the last word in rating quarterbacks: It can't be done.

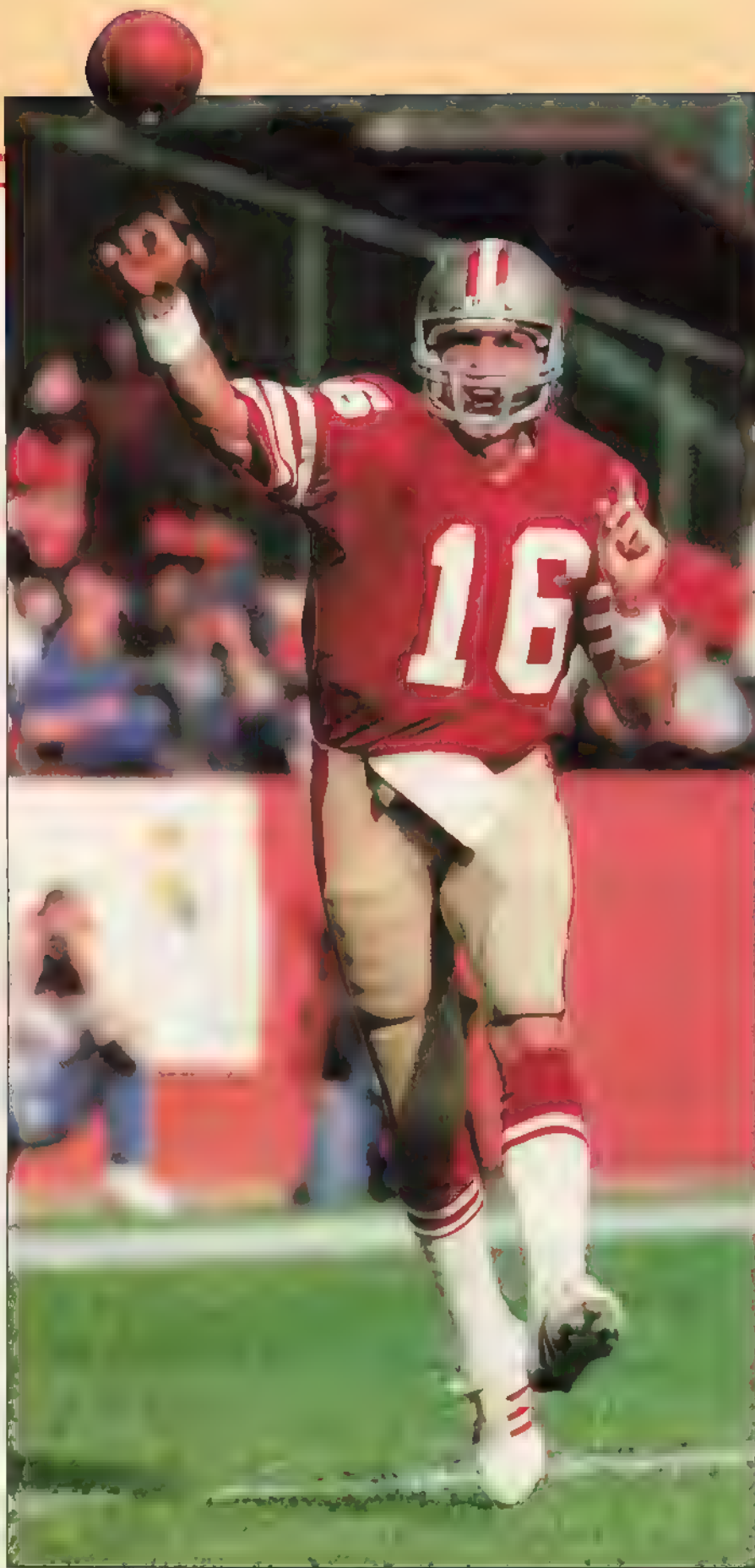
Football isn't like baseball, where all conditions are at least comparable and where a player's personal stats—the *right* stats, anyway—tell you most of what you need to know about a player's value to his team. Besides, no matter how much baseball you watch, you're only seeing the tip of the iceberg, so you can't make any evaluation *without* statistics.

Football is different. *Everyone* is good; there's no room for anyone who isn't. But how do you use statistics to make distinctions among good players? Is a high interception total the result of poor judgment on the part of a passer, a bad offensive line, or both? Stats can suggest things, but that's about all. The NFL, for instance, rates the percentage of TD passes as a factor in its positively Byzantine quarterback rating system. Why? Where is it written that TD passes are so important? Bart Starr, for instance, had only 16 in his best season. If the offense is scoring, what difference does it make *how* the ball gets into the endzone?

We're mystified by quarterback rating systems that can award a 7.6 for "savvy" or a 6.4 for "grace under pressure." You have to watch a quarterback play, a lot, and *then* look at his stats. But watch him first.

Baseball statistician Bill James calls intangibles "a fan's word for talents that don't exist." We agree. We're *not* calling things such as leadership and grace under pressure intangibles; what we're saying is that there's no clear-cut way to use statistics to separate a quarterback's success or failure from that of his team's. Or perhaps more to the point, a quarterback plays in the context of his team and coach and of what's expected of him. Someone—probably one of us, though we can't remember which one—once said that the ideal quarterback would have Bart Starr's brain and Terry Bradshaw's arm. This is a funny remark, but it's a little dumb: Nobody wins in the NFL with a bad quarterback, and Starr's arm and Bradshaw's brain were good enough to account for nine NFL titles between them.

The point is that different things were ex-



The only question about Montana is if he's the best of all time.

pected of Starr than were expected of Bradshaw (though it should be noted that both got an early reputation as snap-takers for powerful running games, and both continued to have great passing stats after those powerful running games faded), and in the context of what was demanded from each of them they obviously delivered.

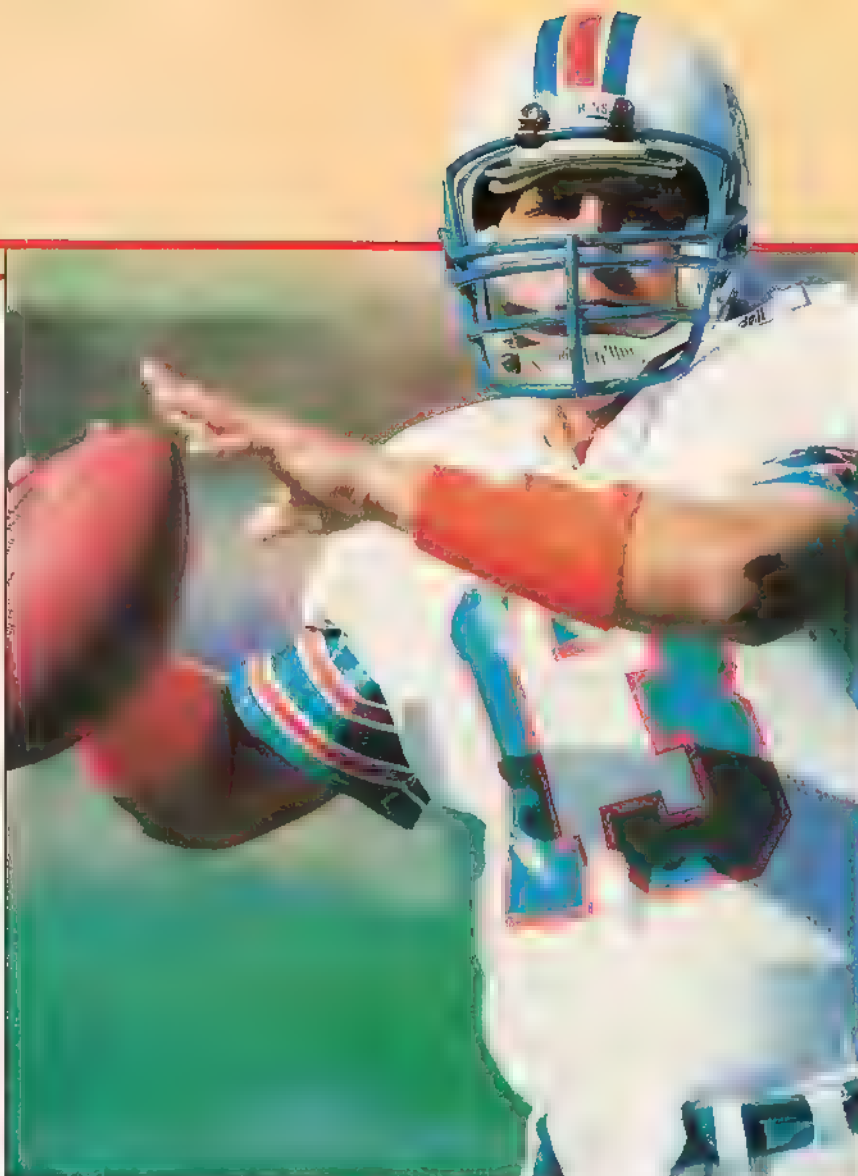
That's not very scientific, but that's why we're picking Joe Montana and Dan Marino as far and away the two best quarterbacks in pro football right now—in fact, the quintessential quarterbacks of '80s-style football. That conclusion doesn't require genius; anyone who saw them play last year would pretty much come to the same conclusion. Believe us, if there was some controversy to stir up here, we'd do it. We just can't find any. We *could* say, what if they played in an era when quarterbacks had to call their own plays? What about pre-1978 rules, when defense dominated? Would Marino be so cocky in an era when quarterbacking involved something more than dropping back and firing the ball to a fast-breaking receiver?

We don't know. There's no reason to suppose Marino wouldn't be a great prospect in any era. The power and accuracy of his arm have sent people scurrying to Sonny Jurgensen for comparison, and he was pretty good, wasn't he? The quickness of Marino's release—some claim they have clocked him and he has the quickest release of any passer in NFL history—makes him almost indefensible in an era when his receivers can't be jammed up close and his blockers can legally do everything but pull switchblades on people trying to tackle him.

How is he under fire? Well, he threw the winning TD against Georgia on the last play of the 1982 Sugar Bowl. His senior year was a near-disaster, but it's tough to say who was responsible for that; perhaps he was being asked to call plays or do something he doesn't do very well. Maybe his arm was too strong at that stage for other college kids.

He got Miami into the Super Bowl last year, and did he really do so bad for a second-year professional? It was as much Shula's failure to make adjustments as Marino's passing that led to the second-half Miami shutdown against the 49ers. After all, who was the 20-year veteran and who was the sophomore? Marino threw two interceptions, both well-thrown balls and both in desperate situations. He did nothing as embarrassing, for instance, as Theismann's screen pass that went for a Raider TD the previous year.

What can stop Marino in 1985? Well, defenses will adjust—or at least try to adjust. Some will try the straight-ahead power rush the 49ers used, and that will test his mobility,



**Can Marino's quick release continue to save his slow feet?**

which some say is questionable. Some will try the tight man-to-man coverage San Francisco often used so effectively—but then how many teams have a defensive backfield with Ronnie Lott, Dwight Hicks, and Eric Wright?

The biggest change might come not on defense but offense—that is, San Francisco definitely proved that Miami has defensive weaknesses, so opponents may come out winging against Miami this year, figuring they have nothing to lose by being daring and forcing Marino and the Dolphins to play catch-up more often than they like. The liberal passing rules apply for both sides. And there's something else that might make a difference: Marino's belly is coming dangerously close to doing an off-sides on his belt. He should've started drinking Diet Pepsi a few months before the commercial with Montana.

We have no doubts about Joe Montana, except perhaps one: We're not quite sure he's the best quarterback ever to play the game. He probably is, but we'll wait a year or two before making the judgment. This we can say now: He's the finest pressure quarterback we've ever seen, bar none. His record in big

games is better than John Wayne's in movie shootouts.

Actually, if Montana had one weakness at Notre Dame it was that he seemed to enjoy pressure *too* much. He never seemed to be fully concentrating on a game until he was down by a couple of TDs. In his sophomore year he earned the starting job by leading the Irish back from a 17-point deficit against Air Force. Injuries lost him the starting job in 1977, but he won it back in the third game by overcoming a 17-point fourth-quarter lead by Purdue and Mark Herrmann, after which he proceeded to lead the Irish to a national title in a spectacular upset of Texas in the Cotton Bowl. He closed out his senior year with a sensational fourth-quarter comeback against Southern Cal that overcame the Trojans' 24-6 lead (USC won in the last 47 seconds, 27-25). No one who saw the 1979 Cotton Bowl against Houston will ever forget the fourth-quarter charge in which Montana brought the Irish back from 34-12 to 35-34 inside of 14 minutes.

Montana's problem was always concentrating when he wasn't behind or when a bowl wasn't on the line (in the first game of his



# RATINGS

## and Inside Stuff

senior year, against a mediocre Missouri team, he blew six scoring opportunities and Notre Dame was blanked, 3-0. You've seen the guy as a pro for five years now. What do you think? Are we exaggerating? Remember the game against New Orleans in which he let himself get down by five TDs before his interest was piqued and he proceeded to lead the biggest points-comeback in the NFL's record book? Or the 1983 NFL title game against the Redskins, in which he let the 49ers get down 21-zip midway through the third quarter before storming back to tie it up? How about the last-ditch, fourth-quarter drive against Dallas that resulted in Dwight Clark's famous fingertip grab? Is a pattern starting to emerge here? Are we suggesting that the way to beat Montana might be to let him get ahead by two or three TDs and try to ambush him? Hey, we might be tempted to give it a try if we didn't have to come back against the San Francisco defense.

Is Montana's game helped by the 1978 passing rules? Was John Dillinger's game helped by

the Tommy gun? With his height, quick drop-back, fine arm (and "soft touch" when it comes to hitting receivers), durability, coolness under pressure, and mobility—above all, that mobility, and his uncanny talent of throwing good balls while on the run—what era in football history would he *not* thrive in? But with the extra time afforded him by the new rules, there may simply be no way of defending him when he's on his game. He can peck you to death with those short, high-percentage throws until you're ready to tear your helmet off in frustration. And if he doesn't like what he sees when he first drops back in the pocket, all he has to do is run around a bit and give the finest corps of receivers in the NFL (which includes running backs Craig and Tyler) another 17 or 18 seconds to find some unoccupied turf.

We suspect that Montana's the best ever to play the game, and that the only thing that can keep him and the San Francisco 49ers from proving it again in '85 is if they become fat and contented. We're guessing that won't be the case.

## Other Men and Arms We Like

1. **Neil Lomax, Cardinals.** We didn't include St. Louis in our "Teams Likely to Improve" (see page 40) because it's obvious they could be the next big power in the NFC. The NFL rated Lomax second only to Montana in the NFC in 1984, and that's just where we put him. Only 16 interceptions to pay for all those yards! The Cardinals need to give him slightly better protection: He was sacked 20 more times than Montana last year.

2. **Dan Fouts, Chargers.** It's ironic that the guy who first brought the passing revolution to our attention should be forgotten in the wave of publicity surrounding Marino. He's had better years than 1984, and his interception rate was higher than some, but not as high as it should have been considering San Diego's schedule last year. He's not Marino at this point, but the biggest part of the difference between them might be the divisions they play in rather than ability.

3. **Phil Simms, Giants.** Yes, we know he has a more awkward wind-up than Goose Gosage, and you just don't think of him as being up there with people like Montana and Marino. But the Giants got more yards passing than all but four other teams in the NFL last year, and they sure as hell didn't get them on the strength of their running game (worst in the league) or the power of their offensive line (55 sacks allowed). We can only conclude that Simms is that rare kind of player who's tough to rate just by watching him play. That he puts up the numbers of a great quarterback is undeniable.

4. **Warren Moon, Oilers.** Sneaked this one in on you, didn't we? Hey, before you cancel your subscription, will you take a look at this guy's stats in relation to the Houston Oilers? We had them rated dead last in the NFL last year, and if you had them much higher, we'll bet you spent most of your weekend at Gilley's. Despite looking like Caster at Little Big Horn every time he went back in the pocket, he managed 7.4 yards a throw, passing to perhaps the worst corps of receivers since—and we're only suggesting this—the 1983 Houston Oilers. Despite all that, his interception rate was only 3.1. That, folks, is only one-tenth of a pass higher than Dan Marino's. He could become the first QB in NFL history to sue a team for nonsupport.

5. **Joe Theismann, Redskins and Tony Eason, Patriots.** They had very similar years. Which do you like, the proven master who may be on the downslide, or the brash young sophomore presumably on the rise? It's not as simple as that: Theismann seems increasingly vulnerable to the rush, but the acquisition of George Rogers could return the Redskins offense to where it was two years ago and rejuvenate Theismann's game, while Eason plays behind a line that has some definite problems (66 sacks allowed, second in the NFL only to Atlanta's 67). Perhaps more important, though, is why Eric Hipple played Eason in Paul Bryant's film biography, "Bear," and what effect that will have on Eason psychologically. Or on Hipple.

—A. B.

**W**HAT THE PASSING INCREASE means to pro football is harder to pinpoint. For one thing, the debate in pro ball has never really been passing vs. running—not since Johnny Unitas, anyway, and not really even in Lombardi's heyday. In pro ball it's always been offense vs. defense, and there's no doubt the change in the rules has "emasculated the defense." College offensive players seldom play against defensive players who are their equals; there just isn't enough talent. Which is one reason why, in the pros, Robbie Bosco won't average 400-plus yards a game passing and Bo Jackson won't average 6.5 yards per try running, no matter how good they are.

In one sense, the importance of the forward pass in pro ball is exaggerated by the success of the two leading teams in the NFL last year. When we predicted a 49ers Super Bowl rout in the January 15 issue of *the Village Voice*, we wrote, "This may be the first time in the history of the Super Bowl that the two participants are unquestionably the two finest teams in pro football." Now, we're not so sure that Miami was all that superior to the rest of the good NFL teams.

The ratings system, incidentally, is the iterative (better approximations) error-learning system that Ignatin uses for his columns on college and pro football in *the Village Voice*. Adjustments are made to dampen the effect of runaway scores. An average is 100; a certifiably good team is 105 or better. San Francisco's score of 114.0 is amazing; no one has been 14 points better than the league average since the mid-'70s Steelers. Miami had a superb team, but one that was only scarcely better than Denver, Seattle, and the Raiders.

How much does schedule matter? A lot, and certainly a lot more than it used to. When nearly everyone played nearly everyone, it didn't matter so much, but now the difference between San Francisco and Houston on a neutral field would almost be the difference in a game between our No. 1 college team (Florida) and No. 30 (Temple). Since most games are intraconference (and each team plays its division foes twice), toughness of division is an important stat. Here are the divisional power ratings for '84:

AFC West . . . . .	105.9
NFC East . . . . .	102.2
NFC West . . . . .	100.4
NFC Central . . . .	98.5
AFC Central . . . .	97.7
AFC East . . . . .	93.9

## Payton's Place Is at the Top

Rating running backs is highly subjective. That's obvious, or should be, but you'd be surprised at how many people try to give statistical ratings based on "guts" or something equally intangible. It's impossible to completely separate a back's performance from that of his team: Yards per try is not like batting average in baseball. Also, pass receptions for backs aren't the blah statistic they were in the mid-'70s, when everyone dumped off to the runners if they couldn't get something hotter going. In today's wide-open game, a good back has to catch passes, and a lot of them. As to the argument over where the line is drawn between halfback and fullback, we're taking a firm stand: We don't know. But if he's a back in a one-back offense, he's a running back. We can't answer for the stupidity of people who waste the talent of backs like Rob Carpenter trying to get them to do things they're manifestly incapable of doing.

### 1. Walter Payton, Bears

Payton may be one of the two or three best . . . oh to heck with the technical analysis. This is *Walter Payton*, for Pete's sake. One thing, though: It's getting tougher to distinguish between a *pitch* to Payton and a *pass* to Payton.



**Dickerson puts daylight between himself and mere mortals.**

About one-half to two-thirds of his pass-receiving yardage could just as easily go into his rushing column.

### 2. Eric Dickerson, Rams

Everyone calls him the best pure runner in football. We'd agree, but that would imply that Walter Payton is somehow impure. Clearly, these are the two best backs in football.

### 3. James Wilder, Buccaneers

We think this guy's the star running back of the future, but then so do the 800 or so people who got to see him play on national TV last year. Some amazing stats: He had 87% of his team's rushing yardage last season, and caught 85 passes for the same average (8.2) as Payton. It's hard to find anyone with comparable stats on such a bad team—but then, it's hard to find a team as bad as Tampa Bay would be without James Wilder.

### 4. Wendell Tyler, 49ers

It's not so much the extra dimension he brought to the 49ers offense as that he simply continued doing precisely what he'd been doing for several seasons, and finally got credit for it. We heard rumors that he used to fumble a lot, but we looked hard for it last year and didn't notice many fumbles. Note to Pete Rozelle: You want parity in the NFL? Start with this rule: Never allow a back with an average of five yards per carry to play on the same team with Joe Montana.

### 5. Marcus Allen, Raiders

Boy, talk about comedowns. One year President Reagan is making jokes on national TV about how good you are, the next year they



**Payton doesn't need analysis—he's just the best ever.**

what he did with 64 passes: an average of just under 12 yards a catch. Tony Nathan had Marino throwing to him and he had less than 10.

### 6. Billy Sims, Lions

He seemed headed for his best year when injuries bogged him down. Do you realize that his yards per try (5.3) was higher last year than the year he won the Heisman Trophy? We don't think that's ever been done before. And the Detroit offensive line probably couldn't have opened a hole against Texas.

### 7. Freeman McNeil, Jets

A great back on a weak team. Despite injuries, he averaged 4.7 yards per carry on a team where half a yard less would have been just fine. Why don't the Jets throw to him more (25 times)? He had the same number of yards per catch as Marcus Allen (11.8).

### 8. Tony Dorsett, Cowboys

He has taken some unfair raps as the Cowboys line has started to deteriorate. He averaged only 3.9 yards per carry, but the Cowboys only got 3.65 as a team. He got 69% of his team's yardage, which is workhorse territory. Has football ever seen such a nonimposing physical force as a workhorse? He caught 51 passes at nine per.

### 9. Craig James, Patriots

He played in Eric Dickerson's shadow at SMU, and if you recall, wasn't rated a great deal lower. His 5.0 yards per try was almost eight-tenths of a yard better than his team. With Eason throwing him passes, this could be the most explosive offense to emerge in '85.

—A. B.



# RATINGS and Inside Stuff

Some surprises here: Overall, the NFC comes out a point stronger, 100.6 to the AFC's 99.6. The 49ers and the Dolphins were criticized all year for playing weak schedules. Was this the case? Undeniably. San Francisco's opponents tallied in at 97.49, Miami's at 97.40. In other words, the 49ers and Dolphins played the Cleveland Browns 16 times last year. Well, not quite, but compared to San Diego, which played 11 good teams whose average rating was 104, the Super Bowl teams had it very easy, indeed. (It should be tougher this year for San Francisco; we estimate its average '85 opponent at 101.7, largely because of matches with the Raiders, Bears, and Broncos. Miami, playing in the bantamweight

AFC East, is estimated at 97.3.)

We can get a good idea of how good a team really is by how consistently it beats the spread, but we can't calculate what the overall effect would have been if they had been forced to play three or four good teams in a row; the 49ers never did. However, we can calculate this: San Francisco, as it proved conclusively in the Super Bowl, was so superior to the rest of the league that the only way it could have had a truly demanding schedule would have been to clone itself five or six times and play the clones.

Do San Francisco's passing stats correlate with its 15-1 record? Are grits in Alabama like grits in Mississippi? The 49ers scored an amazing 475 points (267 in the first two

quarters of their games) second only to Miami's astonishing 513.

Here's another stat we like: Years ago football statistician Bud Goode told us how important yards per attempted pass was. We've now adjusted our yards per pass by subtracting sack yardage from the passing yardage, plus 50 more for each interception.

Here are the top eight:

1. Miami ..... 7.03
2. San Francisco ..... 6.50
3. St. Louis ..... 5.62
4. San Diego ..... 5.13
5. Houston ..... 4.62
6. N.Y. Giants ..... 4.60
7. Washington ..... 4.55
8. New England ..... 4.47

## Five Reasons Why The Jets Won't Win In This Century

**1. The Joe Namath Trade:** When Broadway Joe told the world that he "guaranteed" a victory over the Colts in Super Bowl III, he didn't reveal the deal he'd made with the devil that doesn't expire until the year 2000.

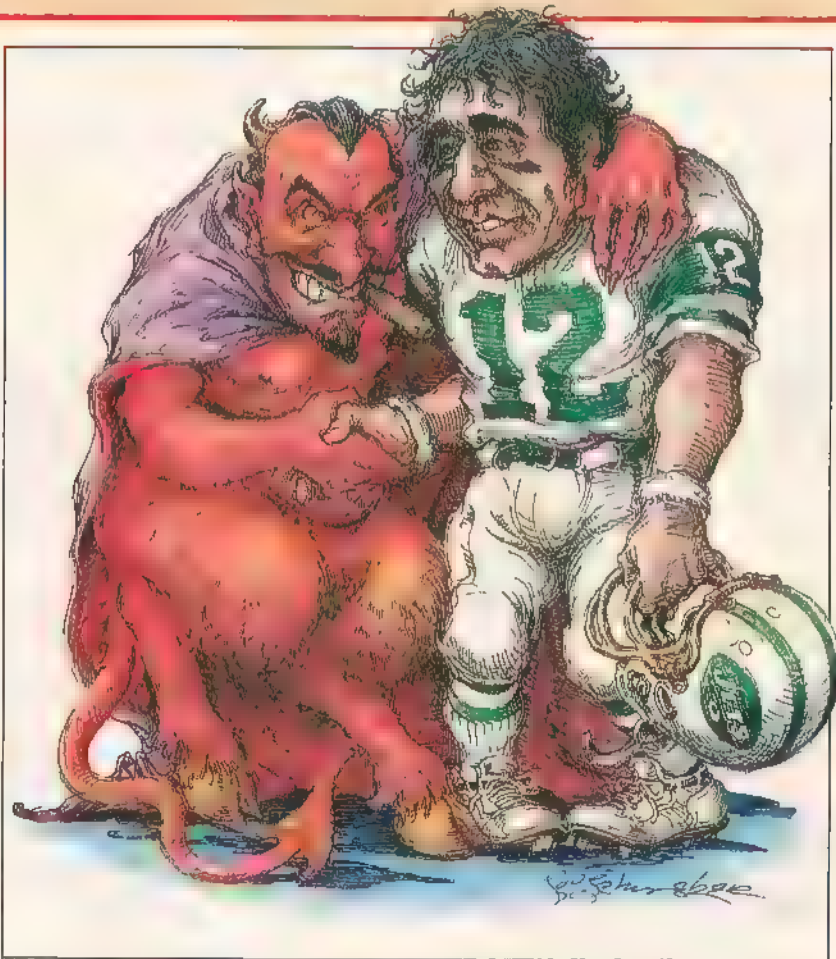
**2. The Pete Rozelle Protégé Problem:** The most recent Jets GMs, Al Ward and Jim Kensil, were previously Pete's paper-pushers. Their messy management has all but destroyed the Sonny Werblin-Weeb Ewbank legacy. Rumor has it that Rozelle's office custodian is next in line for the Jets GM job.

**3. The Gastineau Dance Dilemma:** To paraphrase a new John Fogarty tune, "Mark can't dance, but he'll steal the glory." The NFL's censoring of Gastineau's act only seemed to fuel his blatant self-promotion, to the obvious dismay of Jets players. You not only can't dance, you can't *win* when your best player is disliked by teammates.

**4. The Dan Marino Mistake:** Selecting QB Ken O'Brien ahead of division rival Miami's choice of Marino in the '83 draft will haunt this franchise for a generation.

**5. The Black Sheep Syndrome:** The Jets—always the Mets' poor relatives when they played at Shea Stadium—now play second fiddle to the Giants in New Jersey. Secret plans call for owner/gas-station czar Leon Hess to move the team to Libya, where the restrooms are clean, where he can get his oil wholesale, and where Khadafi can be installed as offensive coordinator.

—Stephen Hanks



**A clause in the deal Namath made with the devil to help him win Super Bowl III says the Jets can't go to the big one again until the year 2000.**

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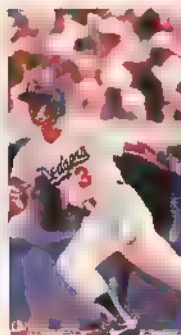
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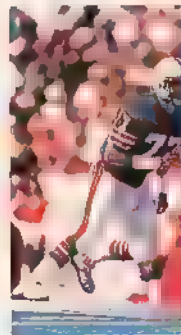
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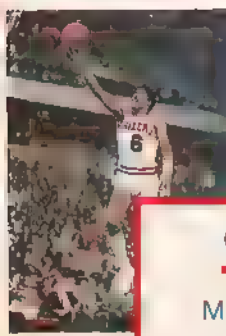
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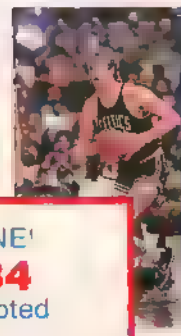
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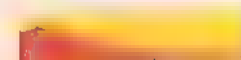
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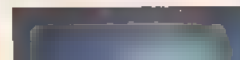
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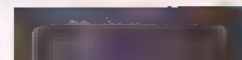
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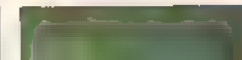
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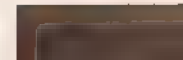
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# RATINGS

## and Inside Stuff

One bad team, Houston, and three mediocre ones (the Chargers, Giants, and Patriots) are in the top eight.

But here's a stat that *no* bad team showed up in; in fact, the worst team on this list, according to the power ratings, is the Bears, who were almost four points better than average. Here are the top eight in ratios of interceptions made to interceptions thrown:

1. San Francisco ..... 2.50
2. Denver ..... 1.82
3. Washington ..... 1.62
4. Seattle ..... 1.46
5. Chicago ..... 1.40
6. Miami ..... 1.33
7. St. Louis ..... 1.31
8. Pittsburgh ..... 1.24

Here are the worst eight, in order of crumminess, with the averages turned upside down: interceptions thrown to interceptions made. Only one good team, the Raiders, appears on this list, and this stat alone may explain why they didn't repeat.

1. Minnesota ..... 2.27
2. New Orleans ..... 2.15
3. Buffalo ..... 1.88
4. Atlanta ..... 1.67
5. Detroit ..... 1.57
6. N.Y. Jets ..... 1.40
- L.A. Raiders ..... 1.40
8. Tampa Bay ..... 1.28

How does rushing measure up to passing in correlation with winning? Not well. We adjusted each team's rushing totals and subtracted 40 yards per fumble (trust us, that's what it works out to be) and figured yards per rush.

### Top Five

1. L.A. Rams ..... 3.96
2. Green Bay ..... 3.77
3. San Francisco ..... 3.72
4. Chicago ..... 3.46
5. N.Y. Jets ..... 3.31

### Worst Five

1. Philadelphia ..... 1.83
2. Tampa Bay ..... 2.02
3. L.A. Raiders ..... 2.10
4. San Diego ..... 2.14
5. Cleveland ..... 2.16

Frankly, we're not sure how much to make of this. The top five includes the best team in football, a couple of OK teams, and one truly awful team, in the Jets. The "worst" list includes one truly outstanding team, in the Raiders. (By the way, have you noticed that

*Continued on page 42*



## 10 Reasons To Hate The Dallas Cowboys

1. Dallas.
2. The Dallas Cowboys players.
3. The Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders. In the immortal words of Jayne Kennedy: "Whatever happened to integrity in cheerleading?"
4. The movie about the Dallas Cowboys Cheerleaders, in which Bert Convy describes them as "every man's fantasy, and every woman's ideal."
5. The Dallas Cowboys front office, which exerts an influence on its employees' off-the-field existence that the Reagan administration might admire.
6. The Dallas Cowboys coach. What an inspiring leader. Can you imagine Knute Rockne winpering to his team, "I gave you a perfectly good game plan and you blew it?"
7. The Dallas Cowboys star running back.

Can you imagine O. J. Simpson having thechutzpah to accent his name on the second syllable just because he won the Heisman?

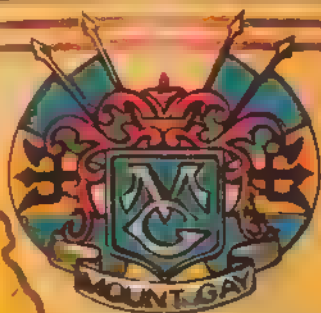
8. The Dallas Cowboys schedule. Ever notice how the Cowboys always manage to get that Thanksgiving Day slot on TV, usually against Tampa Bay? When was the last time the Cowboys beat a good AFC team?

9. The Dallas Cowboys image. "America's Team"? "Pro Football's Longest Lasting Dynasty"? Give us a break, Howard—the Cowboys are the most chronic chokers in the history of the game.

10. The Dallas Cowboys fans. A bunch of spoiled front-runners who deserted Texas Stadium in droves as soon as the team started losing more than once a month.

—Sebastian Dangerfield

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# RATINGS

## and Inside Stuff

### Four Teams Likely To Improve in 1985

#### 1. Green Bay

If you look at this team closely, you wonder how it finished only 8-8. If you look closer, you see why: They didn't know what kind of team they had. Everyone perceives the Packers as a great-pass, no-run, no-defense team. But the stats say the opposite: The defense wasn't bad at all, ranking fourth in our (adjusted) yards per pass (3.02) ratings, and the rushing attack had the second highest (adjusted) yards per carry in the league! We'll bet that hasn't happened to the Packers since the mid-'60s. It was the passing that hurt: The Packers tied Buffalo for the league lead in interceptions allowed (30), which screwed the defense more times than it could recover from. Ten fewer interceptions could mean a couple of games difference; the rest of the tools are there.

#### 2. Kansas City

Another 8-8 team that wasn't too bad, it just threw too many interceptions (22). Or rather, it failed to tackle the other team when it did intercept. The Chiefs gave up an incredible 653 yards and seven TDs on *pass interceptions*—a rookie RB with stats like those would get a nice raise. We think Todd Blackledge is more mobile and a better passer than Bill Kenney; the Chiefs coaching staff obviously doesn't. But whoever plays quarterback, for goodness sake, fellas, don't just walk off the field when the other team picks off a pass. Get out there and tackle 'em!

#### 3. Philadelphia

It's easy to pinpoint what went wrong with the Eagles: They had an unbelievable injury list, particularly the offensive line, and they fumbled so damn much they had the lowest (adjusted) rushing yards per try in the league (1.83). Their sack total (60) was fourth best in the league, but their line canceled that by allowing their QBs (mostly Jaworski) to be sacked 60 times as well. Montgomery can still run if given some help, and since we don't think an offensive line can suffer so many injuries two years in a row, we think the Eagles will improve their 6-9-1 record.

#### 4. N.Y. Jets

Along with Atlanta, this is the only team in the bottom eight of our power ratings to have injuries as an excuse. We're not saying they'll challenge anyone; we're just saying they're a better team than they looked in '84. They had one of the worst interceptions-caught-to-thrown ratios in football, but don't you think O'Brien is going to get better? I mean, *someone* thought he was a better prospect than Marino, right? In fact, let's admit it: We *all* thought he was a better prospect than Marino.





## Four Teams Likely to Decline in 1985

### 1. Dallas

Guessed this before we said it, didn't you? They were 20th in the league in (adjusted) yards per pass, and no immediate relief is in sight. They ranked 23rd in (adjusted) rushing offense! They were still high in sacks (57). But they have so many players who have slowed a step. These guys look like the Green Bay Packers going into the 1969 season.

### 2. N.Y. Giants

This team's got guts. They won the games they had to win in order to make their season look better than it was. The Giants are a below-average team with an overrated defense (17th in adjusted yards per pass, 4.20), and they were only eighth in total points allowed. The rushing attack would have to improve to be called mediocre—dead last on the NFL's yards-per-rush list at 3.4. The best that can be said for the running game is that it doesn't cough up the ball. (The longest run from scrimmage last year was 28 yards—couldn't they have managed an end-around longer than that? Couldn't management have sprung for, say, George Rogers if he was available?) Gutsy Phil Simms repeatedly chooses the sack to the interception, something he was soundly criticized for last year in the New York press—the guy had a choice??? At this point, Simms' future (and that of the Giants) hangs on each hit. If he gets battered in '85 the way he did in '84, the AMA should leave boxing alone and go after football.

### 3. L.A. Raiders

This is provisional, of course; it's altogether

possible that Marc Wilson can solve the QB problems. We'll see. Meanwhile, this team couldn't pass consistently (the 23rd worst interceptions-made-to-thrown ratio in the league) or even run—would you believe the 26th worst (adjusted) yards-per-rush average (2.10)? Those who rely on defense alone in these times of dominating offenses are living dangerously.

### 4. Chicago

This, too, is provisional and for the same reason as the Raiders, but shakier: *Maybe* McMahon will stay healthy. But we want to make a point here about Ditka's macho-style football. You don't intimidate NFL football players with rough-house tactics—not the good ones, anyway. All you do is anger them. The Bears have a history of playing a bruising, take-out-the-opposing-quarterback style of football much admired by guys who spend Sunday afternoon on barstools. You'd think someone would have figured out by now that the Bears haven't had a steady QB since Sid Luckman, and that might have to do with the fact that if you take out the other team's passer (or kicker: Remember that, too, Mike) then they're going to retaliate by doing it to your passer. And that there are 15 teams in the league and 45 QBs to your three. What chance do you think a Bears QB has of going through the season uninjured? What chance do you think there is that Ditka will wise up and accept discretion as the better part of macho? Our answer: the same chance the Bears have of going to the Super Bowl. —A. B.



# RATINGS and Inside Stuff

## Five Things You're Sure To See And Hear At Giants Stadium When The Giants Are Out Of The Race By Midseason

1. Sellout crowds (Giants fans have always been devout masochists).
2. Fans barbecuing season tickets (in effigy) at tailgate parties.
3. Banners asking to "Bring back Rocky Thompson."
4. Dallas Cowboys lineman Randy White taking the ball from Giants QB Phil Simms' hand on a Statue of Liberty play and running for a game-winning, 85-yard touchdown with less than a minute in the game.
5. Rumors that Billy Martin will take over as head coach.

—S. H.



*Continued from page 38*

the Raiders have shown up on two *bad* offense lists and no good ones? Do you think maybe by the time we get to defense we'll start to see why they won so many games?)

In any event, if they point out nothing else, NFL rushing stats clearly illustrate the difference between the pro and the college game: College teams that finish near the top in yards per rush are virtually unbeatable. The Bears got a lot of credit, and rightly so, for having a good ball-control rushing attack that carried the team after one of its 15 or 16 quarterback injuries. Notice that hardly anyone remembers the names of Nebraska's and Oklahoma's QBs year in and year out, and no one calls *them* "ball control" teams. Not when they're getting six or seven yards a crack rushing.

**H**OW DEFENSE FIGURES INTO all this isn't so easy to determine from a quick glance at the stats; but a first look does indicate that defenses really took their lumps in '84. For instance, after three straight years of increases in the

number of interceptions per 100 passes—all the way to 4.41 in '83—the rate nosedived to scarcely over 4.0 last year. And in case you have any doubts about how the 1978 rules changed the game, note that the rate for the 10 years prior to the rules change was 5.31! So there is absolutely no mystery as to why everyone passes so much more now, and it has nothing to do with stronger arms or faster feet. The reason is because there is much less risk involved. Passing used to have built-in booby traps in the form of interceptions, penalties, and sacks that would eventually catch up to even the best passing attacks. Not anymore. Whether the NFL changed the rules for reasons of greed, or because it felt it had reached a point similar to where baseball was in 1968, when defense began to overwhelm offense—or both—the precious extra second or so allowed NFL QBs has turned the game into a passing circus. Not everyone does it that much better than they used to, but everyone does it more, and the defenses are clinging by their fingernails in an effort to catch up.

Sacks, of course, are one important way for defenses to compensate; one 12-yard

sack can erase an awful lot of passing yardage. Since it's now more important to stop the pass, teams are devising all sorts of hell-bent-for-leather blitzing strategies to counter the push-and-hold tactics of linemen. The Bears defense came within one game of carrying a remarkably weak offense—325 points, 188 fewer than Miami—into the Super Bowl by setting a league record with 72 sacks. But glowing as that stat is, it helps to disguise a weakness: A blitz is a gamble, and you don't gamble unless you have to.

Of the top six teams in sacks (after the Bears came Washington with 66, the Raiders with 64, the Eagles with 60, and Denver and Dallas with 57), none finished in the top 10 in the league in points scored. Or stated a different way, the teams with great offenses could protect *their* passers and didn't see too much reason to gamble and allow the opposing passer a chance to score quickly and get back into the game. The 49ers and Dolphins did OK in the sack department (51 and 42, respectively), with strong pass rushes that seldom needed to blitz to apply pressure.

*Continued on page 46*

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# RATINGS

## and Inside Stuff

### 49ers vs Oilers? Take the 'Niners And Give 4 TDs



The 49ers were the No. 1 team last year. The Packers didn't reach the playoffs, but were better than five teams that did.

## Passing Fads and Passing Frenzy

Over the door of the Lone Star Cafe in New York City are the words "Too Much Ain't Enough." Well, from the perspective of this bar stool, too much is enough, and too much passing in pro football is behind the ratings drop and the general decline in the sport's appeal. See, it's *too* exciting. What I mean is, we're suffering from sensory overload. Like with booze and women, you *can* have too much of a good thing.

The emasculation of defenses with the late '70s rules changes has turned the game into a passing frenzy, with the number of passes increasing by more than 25% from 10 years ago. Watching football games has become like a succession of one-night stands or an endless row of shooters. OK, maybe it was a little boring in the mid-'70s watching three off-tackle plunges and a punt, but when a quarter-

back connected on a long bomb, it was a delicious release of slowly building tension. As any behavioral psychologist will tell you, partial reinforcement (i.e., an exciting pass play once in a while) is a much more powerful behavior modification tool (i.e., increasing a fan's passion for the game) than constant reinforcement (i.e., Dan Marino throwing 50 pitches—oops, passes—in an afternoon).

Proof? By appearances, what could be more boring than baseball. In terms of activity, very little seems to happen most of the time. Yet, its timeless appeal is that an explosion of action lurks within the slow, steady rhythm of the game. When it comes—Yowza!—and you sit back, savor it for a few minutes, and start anticipating again.

What's the true demon behind the decline in pro football's viewer appeal? Greed. In the

1970s, Pete Rozelle and Company were riding a football boom (there was even yammering in the silver circles that it had usurped baseball as our national game). Well, like capitalists everywhere—and never forget that pro football, like all pro sports, is a business first and last—the brain trust of the NFL decided to keep expanding its base. They figured: "Let's keep growing by attracting the casual and even the nonsports fans. Let's make the game simpler, more accessible, and more exciting."

And they futzed with the rules until they turned football into an aerial pinball game, full of sound and fury and scoring, offering more while signifying less. They may have picked up some new viewers in the form of (wisely) indifferent housewives, but they undermined the passion of the hard-core fan.

—Paul Taublieb

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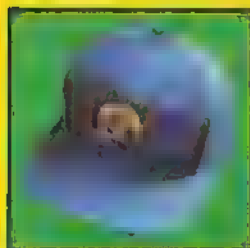
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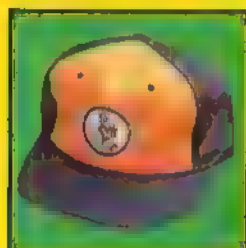
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A



# RATINGS and Inside Stuff

Continued from page 42

A warning, though: *Some* kind of pass rush is a must. Here are the worst five in the NFL in sacks.

1. Minnesota ..... 25
2. Buffalo ..... 26
3. Tampa Bay ..... 32
3. Houston ..... 32
5. San Diego ..... 33

There isn't a team here that approaches being good.

But here's where the nature of offensive and defensive stats part company. If a team finishes in the top five in total yards and points, it's pretty hard to argue that its offense isn't potent. But judging defenses by the points they allow is highly dubious at best, and the number of yards allowed is

totally misleading. During a "Monday Night Football" telecast a couple of years ago, Howard Cosell—with his usual pompous arrogance and nearsighted ignorance that is allowed by his colleagues to pass for football wisdom—declared that Dallas and Washington were remarkably weak in pass defense for two of the league's most powerful teams. Like Groucho in "Duck Soup," Cosell should send out for a 12-year-old boy to explain it to him. The NFL inexplicably rates its defenses by the number of yards allowed, and the best teams are going to finish low in this category because they establish big leads early, forcing their opponents to spend the rest of the game trying to catch up by passing.

We like our method better; it's not perfect, but it's more accurate than the NFL's. To figure the *adjusted* yards allowed per

pass, we subtract from the total passing yards the number of yards lost in sacks, and 50 yards for each interception. This gives us the total adjusted yards on pass plays, which we then divide into total pass attempts (including sacks). Here are the top 10:

1. Seattle ..... 2.21
2. Dallas ..... 2.41
3. Chicago ..... 2.83
4. Green Bay ..... 3.02
5. L.A. Raiders ..... 3.06
6. Pittsburgh ..... 3.11
7. Kansas City ..... 3.37
8. Cleveland ..... 3.39
9. Miami ..... 3.48
10. San Francisco ..... 3.57

Once again, this is a curious kind of measurement, more accurate for picking out bad teams than good ones. It does point out that teams such as Green Bay and Cleveland had better defenses than were perceived, and indicates that their offenses must have put them in quite a few holes—which was, in fact, the case. But look at the last eight teams in this category:

21. Indianapolis ..... 4.80
22. N.Y. Jets ..... 4.96
23. Buffalo ..... 5.14
24. Atlanta ..... 5.25
25. Houston ..... 5.28
26. San Diego ..... 5.56
27. Detroit ..... 5.60
28. Minnesota ..... 6.27

Only San Diego can blame part of this on a killer schedule. The Buffalo and Minnesota defenses were worse than they even had a *right* to be, worse than could have been anticipated in a 28-team league. How bad were they? Well, let's put it like this: The Bills allowed 454 points, the Vikes 484, and these may be more breathtaking stats than Miami and San Francisco's points *scored*. Minnesota was putrid in everything; the Bills were surprisingly strong against the run, finishing (in our system, which adjusts for the Bills finishing fifth in the league in fumble recoveries with 21) sixth in yards allowed per rush at 2.38. But, essentially, both were bad because they couldn't stop their opponents from passing at will. Never in NFL history has the gap between the best and worst been so great. ■

Contributing writer ALLEN BARRA and GEORGE IGNATIN were assisted by Sebastian Dangerfield, Stephen Hanks, and Paul Taublieb in compiling and writing this ratings section. Allen's last piece for *LS* was his rating (D+) of the Hagler-Hearns War.

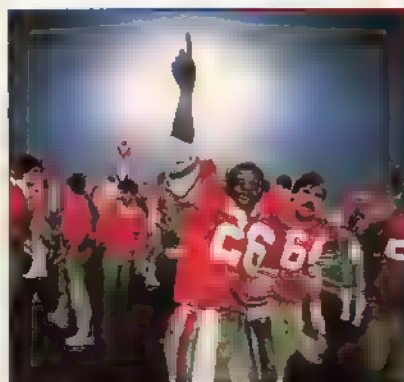
## 5 Ways To Build a Dynasty

1. Start with a team that has consistently finished low in the standings and has had time to stockpile talent, preferably in a city that has never had a winning tradition and where the populace is so starved for a winner that the media serves as more of a public relations department than as an adversary. A city like San Francisco.

2. Hire a coach who's available because his arrogance and refusal to accept traditional football clichés as wisdom has put him in disrepute with the NFL establishment, a coach who understands the new passing rules and how profoundly they've changed football, who designs a game plan around his players' talents rather than the usual NFL coaching philosophy that attempts to mold players into a reflection of the coach's ego. Hire someone like Bill Walsh.

3. Pick up, at bargain rates, a quarterback who is still available sometime after the first round because he doesn't fit "the classic mold" of an NFL dropback passer, but who will add new dimensions to your offense with his mobility and demonstrative grace under pressure. Someone who moves and throws like Joe Montana.

4. Understand that the expanded rosters enable football teams with vision to use talents in a way similar to baseball's platoon system as perfected by Casey Stengel and Earl Weaver. Use players whose all-around abilities are marginal but who might have talents valuable in certain situations, such as Hacksaw Reynolds, too old to play a full game at linebacker but a good man to have around for goal-line stands; such as little Freddie Dean and Gary



**Tyler and the 49ers could give lessons on being No. 1.**

(Big Hands) Johnson, not particularly helpful stopping the run, but mighty devastating against third-and-eight.

5. Don't be cheapskates. The basic capitalist critique of socialism is that it destroys individual initiative. If the NFL is any indication, the capitalists could be right. The NFL system of guaranteed profit for all keeps management complacent and unresponsive to the team's needs. How else can you explain why the sport with the fattest TV contract is paying Walter Payton less than George Steinbrenner is paying his second-string catcher? If your defending Super Bowl champ suffers the following season for lack of a running game, do some shopping around. Who knows, maybe the other 27 teams will be foolish enough to let you sign a back like Wendell Tyler?

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SPT



# RATINGS

## and Inside Stuff



Montana has not signaled his last Super Bowl touchdown—take our computer's word for it.

## How the Ratings System Works

Essentially the computer plays each game of the season in chronological order. It tries to predict the outcome (the difference between the home team's score and the visiting team's score). The computer is an obsessive-compulsive perfectionist and hasn't been told that NFL scores always land on whole numbers, and so it tries to predict the scores to eight decimal places. Thus, the computer is always wrong. But it figures the amount by which it is wrong and tries to reduce the size of the error.

After running through the entire season (all the games that have been played up to the time the computer starts figuring), the computer reruns ("iterates") the season—this time starting with the numbers (adjusted power ratings) and home-field advantage of each team that resulted from the end of the first "run." (A run is defined as playing all the games

of the season.) After running through the season a second time, the computer runs the season again, using the numbers from the second run. It keeps doing this, running through the season 10 to 20 times.

Using the two teams' power ratings (relative abilities) and home-field advantages through the season (difference between each team's power ratings home and away), the computer tries to predict the difference in the score of a game. Then, based on the error (difference between the predicted difference and the actual difference), the power ratings and home-field advantages are adjusted.

Let's look at an example: Denver is playing at home against Chicago. According to the power ratings (see page 44), Denver is predicted to beat Chicago by four points. If Denver were to win by 13 points, the error

would be nine points. The computer would increase Denver's power rating by one point, decrease Chicago's by one point. Also, both team's home-field advantages would increase by .05 points. If Denver had won by less than nine points, its power rating would have been increased by less than one point, and Chicago's rating would have decreased by less than a point. An eight-point victory would increase Denver's rating (and decrease Chicago's) by .67 points, and each team's home-field advantage would have been increased by .03 points.

If Chicago would have beaten Denver by 21 points, the error would have been 25 points. The computer would have decreased Denver's (and increased Chicago's) power rating by 1.67 points. It would decrease both home-field advantages by .08 points.

—G. I.

# SOUTHERN COMFORT

Southern Comfort Corp., 80-100 Proof Liqueur, St. Louis, Mo © 1983



"My Plantation  
consists of exactly  
six tomato plants  
out behind the garage.  
But with a cool evening  
breeze rustling through  
the leaves and a couple  
of O J Comforts  
up here on the deck,  
I know what good old  
Southern Hospitality  
is all about.  
That's Comfort."



# Going for More Than Gold

By ANN LIGUORI

**W**ILL BOROUGH SHOWED UP in the hotel lobby that cold Saturday afternoon in New York City and cautiously greeted two men in charge of getting him from the city to Parsippany, N.J. He was to attend a dinner as part of the first event sponsored by the Carl Lewis Foundation to benefit disabled children.

Will Borough was the name he was registered under, but he is better known to the world as Carl Lewis—known at least throughout Europe and Japan, but not really known or understood in his homeland. Perhaps "Will Borough" sounded like an appropriate stage name for the individual who so confidently showed up in that hotel lobby. His full-neck, turquoise, designer sweater peeked out of a dark brown mink jacket. White snake-skin sunglasses hung from a pocket of his straight-leg pants. The outfit was tied neatly by a gold-buckled belt. He later explained that he was having white-and-black snake-skin boots made to match his newly acquired sunglasses.

A gleaming black limousine waited in front of the hotel doors for the handsome, 6'2", 174-pound 23-year-old who looked like a newly discovered Hollywood singer, actor, or dancer—a man of fame and fortune, or at least a man aspiring to higher levels of stardom and mystique.

The air of celebrity that Carl Lewis projected indicated he was on his way to transcending the pain of continued media criticism and bitterness, and acquiring the courage and strength to prevail, determined to be his own man in a world of harsh judgment and microscopic unveiling. The Carl Lewis who jumped and ran to four gold medals and into the view of billions worldwide in the 1984 Summer Olympic Games is rising above misperception and entering Stage II of his career.

Earlier, the limousine had pulled up a long

*Carl Lewis is proud of his four medals, but he longs to be a singer or actor, to elevate himself to the rare level of a Michael Jackson*

driveway to the elegant estate of an established East Orange lawyer, Eldridge Hawkins, whose wife, Linda, was one of the organizers of Essex-New Directions, a black woman's professional organization. This group sponsored the benefit dinner, during which several of Lewis' Olympic Trial and training outfits were to be auctioned off to banquet patrons, with proceeds paying summer camp expenses for disabled kids.

Lewis was ushered into the lavishly decorated living room and offered juice and assorted hors d'oeuvres. Hawkins organized the articles of clothing that were to be auctioned off, emphasizing that Lewis had "set history, and whether people realized it or not," Lewis was "going to set more history, and these items are going to have great value one day."

"It is hard for me to look at these things. I just wore the clothes and had a good time. Like my mother told me one time, 'It's hard for me to think of you as more than who you are.'"

Lewis nibbled on the hors d'oeuvres, minding his manners with the sophistication of a gentleman who has been around the world five times. One by one, his articles of track clothing were handed to him to sign. Almost out of habit, he signed and dated the shorts, the sweats, the running shoes.

"I'm a very hard worker at what I do and I carefully plan many things. I don't jump into anything."

The floral-upholstered furniture and drapes in the living room provided a pleasing atmosphere to talk about motivation and inspiration. Here was an individual who won gold medals in the 100 and 200 meters, the long jump, and the 4 × 100 relay, in which he ran the anchor leg of the American team's world record 37.83 performance. Prior to the Olympic Games, Lewis won three gold medals at the World Track and Field Championships in Helsinki in 1983. He has run the third fastest 100 meters in history (9.97), and in the long jump he holds the indoor world record with a mark of 28'10¼". Lewis was named Track and Field Athlete of the Year by *Track and Field News* in 1982, '83, and '84, and the Associated Press chose Lewis as 1984's Male Athlete of the Year for the second straight year (a double achieved previously only by tennis star Don Budge, 1937-38, and golfer Byron Nelson, 1944-45). Perhaps the greatest honor for Lewis, however, was being named recipient of the Jesse Owens International Amateur Athlete Award in February 1985. Lewis won his gold medals in Los Angeles in the same events in which Jesse Owens won his four gold medals in the 1936 Berlin Olympics. After achieving so much so early, one wonders if this young man has anything else to accomplish in the world of track and field.

"This is my sixth year on the circuit and the first meet for me is sort of depressing because you get there and you see the same stadium, the same people, and you just say, 'Oh boy, another year of this.' But once you start competing, it just livens up again because that is what you are there for. I think this is the year when people want to knock me off more than ever. I do not want to lose the long jump, which I haven't lost in years, and I'll just keep myself motivated enough to keep competing and keep getting better and better. I still think that I can improve in the sprints and in the long jump."

Just then a fast-beat, pleasing sound coming out of the family room grabbed his attention. The sound was exciting, the voice



soothing. The song was "Going for the Gold," and the voice belonged to the congenial athlete who sat relaxed on the flowered sofa. Lewis looked up, smiled, and went into the other room when asked to pick one track of the recording to be played later at the banquet. When the song started, more excitement was felt in the room than seen in Carl at the Milrose Games the evening before, prior to his first long-jump attempt of the 1985 indoor season.

*"I'll sustain the motivation probably two or three more years. This year I'm going to compete up through July and then take off. This year I'm changing my schedule around to do the things I'd like to do. I'm looking forward to that, competing early on so I can finish the season early."*

Lewis and the producer of "Gong for the Gold," Narada Michael Walden, met a few years ago at a San Jose track meet and became friends. Six months prior to the Olympic Games, Walden (who has a hit single, "Gimme, Gimme, Gimme," and who has produced for, among others, Aretha Franklin, Sister Sledge, and Patty Austin) decided to produce "Going for the Gold" with Lewis on vocals.

"I enjoy very much being involved with the spirit of the athletes," Walden says. He wanted to write a song on "what it means to strive to win the gold." It was Walden's intention and hope that the song would catch on, especially with other athletes. He said that although it didn't explode in the United States, the single did quite well in Germany and Japan.

Walden thinks Lewis is a natural singer, and if he'd like to make more records it would be easy for him. Walden admires Lewis' spontaneity, his "be here now" attitude, and his ability to concentrate on the project at hand. "When it came time for him to sing he

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**'I was sensitive to all of the criticism at the Olympics, but I didn't think I was wrong.'**



just went out and sang. When he had to redo something, it was very natural for him."

Walden says he feels as if he and Lewis have been brothers for a long time. In fact, Walden turned Lewis on to a New York City-based Indian spiritual leader, Sri Chinmoy, author of the book "The Outer Running and the Inner Running." Walden explained that the 53-year-old Chinmoy gave Carl a spiritual name, "Sudhahota," meaning "spiritual"—a name denoting that Lewis' highest mission on earth is that of a giver and self-sacrificer.

Lewis says he has always been spiritual. He says that "accepting God in 1981" has a lot to do with the way he handles the pressures of winning and losing and dealing with the good and bad times. He doesn't close doors to any form of inspiration. He received a lot of inspiration from the guru who advised him to "keep seeking God and be a positive role model for everybody."

"I can see a pretty flower one day and it inspires me," Lewis adds. Whatever the source of inspiration, it really helped Lewis in decision making, particularly in choosing the University of Houston and his coach, Tom Tellez. It wasn't until college that Lewis' athletic potential was tapped.

*"I remember going to sleep the night before I selected Houston, and my mother basically put her foot down and said, 'You're making a decision tomorrow.' She was tired of receiving a hundred phone calls a day, people coming over and knocking on the door and asking, 'Where is he going?' She actually woke me up very early (I'm not an early riser), and when she asked me what school I was going to, before I even thought, I said, 'Houston.' And she said, 'OK' and she went back downstairs and I think she was mixed up about the school she wanted me to go to. I just sat there and wondered why I said Houston. It just came out. I didn't even think about it. I started to wonder if that was the right decision, and every time I thought, my mind just got mixed up for some reason. It was saying, 'Don't you dare change your mind.' I was destined to go there."*

Another incident that Lewis feels was spiritually inspired occurred the night before a track meet in Chicago. A friend of his, Willie Gault, now a wide receiver for the Chicago Bears, came over and told Lewis that he wanted him to meet somebody. Lewis is normally quiet before a meet, avoiding going out and meeting people. So he told his friend, "No, Willie, that's OK, I'll just stay in my room. I'm kind of tired." But his buddy persisted and Lewis had to tell him again that he really didn't feel like going out the night before his meet. When Gault started to leave, Lewis suddenly gave in and went with him, and that was the night Lewis became involved with Labors for Christ. The next day, he "prayed to receive Christ, and now I

look back, understand more, and see that someone was nudging me all along."

**L**EWIS WAS IN THE FAMILY room now listening to the tracks of his song before choosing the instrumental track, the one without his voice. He hadn't gone through the song since recording it in San Francisco more than a year earlier, but he was ready to sing the lyrics over the track when played at the banquet that evening.

*"Before, I didn't know how people wrote music or prepared to act and I admire them all because there is so much they have to deal with. Entertainment is a hard field. Sports is different. You have good times, you have bad times, but you are still there. If you're Danny White and they bench you, you're still getting publicity for getting benched. But if you're in entertainment, and you come out with a bad album, they are going to write for one week that your album is terrible, and that's it. You have to always be on top, and it changes so much. It's scary how much it changes."*

By this time, the limo was warming up outside, ready to transport everyone to the main event. The Hawkins' two children, a boy about five years old and a girl three, scampered out to the hallway to say goodbye to their hero. The children reminded Lewis of the relationship he and his sister, Carol, had as kids growing up together, best of friends, sharing everything. That relationship still exists. "She's my 50%," Lewis says.

Carl and Carol got involved in track and field at the ages of eight and six. Their parents were major influences. Mother Evelyn teaches physical education at Willingboro High School, besides coaching the girl's track team there. Father Bill teaches the fifth grade at Milbrook Elementary School and coaches the girl's track team at John F. Kennedy High School in New Jersey. Carol, 21, is competing on the track circuit in sprints and in the long jump "going for the gold" in '88.

*"I like kids. Right now, I like other people's kids, but one day I will have my own. The life that I live is so unstable. I want my life to be as stable as possible before I settle down. Right now it is not even close. I'm still an athlete and I want to become an entertainer. It's going from very little stability to even less. There is no way on earth that I feel I should drag anyone through that."*

The limousine arrived at a large convention center in Parsippany, and Lewis was escorted into a suite filled with refreshments and more hors d'oeuvres. Carl was to hang out in the suite while guests to the semiformal banquet and auction arrived.

Were the guests filing in to hear an entertainer or to see an Olympic hero? It was

difficult to envision "Carl the athlete" that evening. Were it not for his track and field clothing displayed in the ballroom, one would think guests were paying to see an international recording star. But as soon as conversation shifted to the 100- and 200-meter strategy, his track and field expertise surfaced and the adrenaline flowed as the athlete totally absorbed himself in describing the secret that not many sprinters have mastered.

*"In the 200 meters, I stretch it out for about the first 100 and then I probably reach full speed coming off the turn. My objective is between 90 and 110 [meters], when I really want to hit full speed. Right as we're coming out of that turn, it is close, and all of a sudden I'm two yards ahead 'cause I hit full speed just as I'm coming out. It's like a sling shot, and then you run full speed about 20 meters and then you just relax, maintain, hold onto it."*

Lewis went on to describe the state of relaxation in the 100 meters. He feels like he gets out of the blocks and just accelerates, pressing, and then all of a sudden he settles down, not feeling like he's running full speed anymore.

*"The most difficult part is to determine when you can no longer accelerate. That is what is hard, because if you knew, like exactly at 65 meters you can no longer accelerate, you can just relax. But most people can't feel it. It is just like a car—you shift into first, second, all the way into fourth. And then you shift into overdrive. The engine maintains, but it doesn't keep pressing. But what most guys do is they will get into fourth gear, and instead of shifting into fifth, they will stay in fourth. But the accelerator is all the way down, and all of a sudden they get to that point where the engine is haaaaaa—And they don't know how to shift into fifth."*

His technique in the broad jump is a little different. He never wants to attain full speed in the long jump, because "you can't jump if you are running full speed. Nobody can." He says he is somewhere around seven-eighths of full speed. He has an unusually long approach in the long jump at 54 meters (about 173 feet).

Lewis was interrupted at this point and asked to attend a small press conference in a room around the corner from his suite. The president of the organization introduced Carl and opened the floor to questions, first advising reporters not to ask any negative or personal questions. Ignoring the request, a reporter asked the most frequently asked question regarding endorsements—or lack thereof. Lewis told the reporter: "I've actually had tons of offers. I just haven't accepted any." Lewis responded as he had millions of times to that question. He plans long-term; money and short-term endorsements are not on the top of his priority list right now. He



**Lewis outjumped rivals by more than a foot in the '84 Olympics.**

thinks it is more important to pursue acting school, voice lessons—looking ahead to a fulfilling, lasting career—rather than look for immediate bucks.

*"Track and field has been very good, but we've [the family] never been money crazy, because we've always been very comfortable. And as far as I was concerned, I was doing very well and would do very well for the next five or six years, regardless of what I did at the Olympics. It wasn't a situation where this was my shot at becoming a millionaire, and if you miss it, that's it."*

Joe Douglas, Lewis' agent and friend, says that they are waiting to close on several endorsements, but right now they are concentrating on an agreement to do a movie. Douglas says they are waiting for a guarantee before officially signing. The script is undergoing changes, but basically Carl would share the lead with two others in an action comedy about two American basketball players who become entangled in an international plot to find an Israeli woman's

son. Filming is to begin in September of this year under the direction of Arnon Milshon. Douglas turned down one other offer and agreed to have Lewis share the lead instead of starring in a film at this time. "For him to be a novice and to be given a lead is a burden, until he has more experience," Douglas says.

The other positive, impersonal question asked of Lewis at the small press conference dealt with rumors of his being gay. Later he discussed how the issue originated.

*"Well, that is the ultimate attack on a person, a man at least. If I'm going to get at them, that is the ultimate way. But that doesn't work, because nobody can tell me who and what I am. Fellow athletes that I competed against started the rumor. What is sad is that all of them are older than I am. At first it alarmed me and I thought it was crazy. I couldn't believe people really spend time thinking of things to say about me. Unreal! It doesn't bother me anymore. No matter what people call you, they see what you are."*

Lewis has always appeared strong when speaking about this subject, but at one time he was hurt by these attacks—attacks questioning his masculinity, his taste in fashion, his so-called "calculating" actions, and the criticism for not making the fourth and fifth jumps during the long-jump competition at the Olympic Games.

What people don't realize is that Lewis never took the fourth and fifth jumps in competitions prior to the Olympics, if it wasn't necessary. The strenuous pressure the long-jump landing puts on an athlete's knees and entire body forces him to keep them to a minimum, especially if the athlete also competes in sprints or other events. At the Olympics, Lewis' best jump of 28'1/4" was more than a foot longer than his closest competitor's, plus it was getting colder and Lewis had two more events to go, not including heats.

*"Yes. I would say I'm sensitive. I don't understand why people are doing this—I thought I was doing the right thing, and whenever you're not stepping on anybody's toes, you're not hurting anybody, then in the long run you're going to shine—but yes, I'm sensitive in a way that I guess people could hurt my feelings and things can get to me; for instance, the Olympic Games, I was sensitive to that whole situation, but I didn't think I was wrong in what I did. I refused to change goals and ideas to please others. Many depressed people were trying to hurt me. And now I think that many people are beginning to realize it, or understand that they didn't change me or mold me."*

What hurt Lewis more than anything was that the criticism and accusations hurt his family, his friends, his manager, and his coach. But Lewis continues to stand strong when asked about these things. He feels his multifaceted talents and ambitions are beyond these petty insults—he won't allow anything to stand in his way. But any human is vulnerable, and Lewis knows he is no exception.

Lewis has become close with a University of Houston student he met three years ago named Jill Tillman. He describes her as one of his closest friends. Jill accompanied Carl when he received the Jesse Owens Award in New York, but he says she doesn't travel with him too much yet.

"When I go to track meets," he says, "I go to track meets and run and take care of business and come home. I really don't like to drag everybody all around the place." They spend time together at home, but Jill is the one he calls when he goes out to dinner or needs to be picked up at the airport. Lewis says that Jill isn't too crazy about being in the public eye. "She is very understanding with my schedule and a very private person, just like I am," he adds.





**Lewis is pursuing a lasting career, not just fast money.**

**T**HE MOMENT CAME FOR Lewis to make his grand entrance into the ballroom. The women in charge were nervously making final preparations. A five-piece band started a drum roll. Lights out—only a spot of light on the star. Seconds later, a wave of applause crested as Lewis took center stage, microphone in hand, and began singing "Going for the Gold." The audience quieted, not having expected to see Lewis in this capacity. He looked at ease, natural, as if music had been a part of his entire life, or a previous one. He swayed rhythmically to the beat while establishing an instant rapport with the audience. His movements and timing flowed.

Warren Robertson, a prominent drama coach who in the last 15 years has trained more than 11,000 actors at his prestigious Theatre Workshop in New York, has been coaching Lewis periodically since last fall. Robertson thinks that Lewis has tremendous potential as an actor. "I think he is an actor of depth and variety," Robertson says. "I think Carl has a much finer potential than just being an athlete with his own personality." Robertson describes Lewis' vulnerability

and intelligence as his unique qualities. "A lot of athletes, particularly, are very closed off from their feelings. They often stay in a state of action. Lewis, on the other hand, has that emotionality, and balances vulnerability—like Fred Astaire, John Travolta, and Cary Grant—with the principles of aggression and assertiveness."

Robertson says that the fact that Lewis is in a noncontact sport makes a great difference, because his body is not armored against his feelings. Lewis has the sensitivity of an artist, he says. "The energy in Lewis' body is well-balanced—the emotions, the muscles, the intelligence. It allows him to focus, to assimilate force. That is what you want to get in an actor—containment—and Carl is a contained personality. Sometimes he can be spontaneous, sometimes shy." Robertson sees Lewis most resembling a Sidney Poitier.

Concerning the negative press Lewis receives, Robertson says: "We live in an age where people reveal the most personal and private aspects of their lives to get a little attention. There is a hunger for this. Most of the actors I know, among them [Marlon]

Brando and [the late] Jimmy Dean, tend to buffer the public a little bit. They are generally not comfortable in interviews or in exchanges, talking about themselves personally. Carl felt that the writers in the beginning did not give him that personal consideration that they would give Reggie Jackson as a professional. Carl is very sensitive and he closed down a little bit. And in doing that, it made him appear a little aloof, withdrawn—then it just became defensive and counter-defensive. He is so misunderstood."

The banquet, auction, and evening was a big success. From 7:00 p.m. to midnight, Lewis signed one autograph after another, and posed with guests for pictures, pausing temporarily to eat. Lewis had been on stage for seven hours, talking with strangers who loved him.

*"I think everybody has a purpose. My purpose is to help inspire people. I've been put in a position where I can, but everybody has a purpose in one thing or another. And many people recognize that purpose and many don't. And people who recognize . . . it's their duty to try to help the ones who don't."*

Carl remained on stage during the limousine ride back to the city, and for the eighth straight hour he was totally concentrated in conversation. He said he was in a most difficult stage right now.

*"When you're someone like a Michael [Jackson] or a Prince, everything is taken care of. Everything is prepared. And everything is the way it needs to be done. And if you're not known then you kind of just walk around and nobody recognizes you. But in my position, you're there where most things can be prepared, but not everything. I'm like in the middle in a way. I want to kind of elevate myself just a little bit more. I've started doing a lot more independent things—like I love to shop in malls but right now it is so tedious, it is so difficult to be in malls without being hassled. So now I like to just get a personal designer and get all my clothes done. I'm like on the borderline with that."*

Multifaceted Carl Lewis, on the borderline, with ambition and determination to overcome the obstacles to his own inspirations. Stage II calls for striving to capture that mystique and universal admiration possessed by a select few in the world of entertainment. He wants to be the best in the business, whether it's as a singer, actor, or "just the best athlete ever to act." Carl Lewis is well on his way to catching up with Will Borrough, man of stage and screen. As long as Will Borrough keeps climbing, Carl Lewis will be right there with him. ■

ANN LIGUORI is a free-lance writer who is entering Stage II of her career—using an electric typewriter. Ann's last piece for I.S. was on John McEnroe.

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# REQUIEM FOR A JR. MIDDLEWEIGHT

Budd Shulberg, the great sports writer, called professional boxing the slum of sports back in the 1950s, and stories like this one tell you that not much has changed. Even though the Billy Collins scandal is only two years old, there is a seamy familiarity that saturates it like cheap liniment. You can't shake the greasy feeling that you've seen or heard about all of this before. It is a story that should have appeared in some dog-eared back issue of *Ring* magazine, or in an old B movie, all grainy black and blue neon. Look for Rod Steiger to show up in the second reel

By MICHAEL CARUSO

ON A STEAMY JUNE NIGHT IN 1983, thousands of rabid fight fans, more than 20 rowdy thousand, were stacked in tiers around Madison Square Garden's center ring, a blue island floating at the bottom of the darkness. The Hispanic-flavored crowd sizzled in anticipation of the main event, waiting for Roberto Duran to appear in all of his stone-handed glory and avenge his "no más" disgrace on Davey Moore's face. But that bullfight was still an hour away, and the crowd buzzed and milled and sweated, sipping beer from plastic cups and killing time with the undercard.

A baby-faced 21-year-old from Nashville, "Irish" Billy Collins, stepped into the white glare of the television lights to face a local clubber, Luis Resto. Billy Ray Collins was a picture-perfect prospect—a good-looking country boy with red hair and blue eyes (of course, *anything* white in a pair of trunks is a sure-fire commodity). He was managed and trained by his father, Billy Collins Sr., who had carefully steered his son to an undefeated pro record (14-0). Billy Ray carried a lusty right cross (11 KOs), but the book on him noted that he often let people use his face for a catcher's mitt.

Resto, 28, was a journeyman welterweight from the Bronx (20-7-2) who had found his level in the division (ranked about 15th). He was known as a willing scrapper, but he lacked a killer punch (only seven KOs). He was also fighting over his normal weight, having put on seven pounds to face

Collins as a junior middleweight. Nevertheless, he was a cunning boxing veteran, and his trainer, Carlos (Panama) Lewis, was one of the cleverest around.

The fight was a massacre. Resto flooded Collins with punches—stick-pin jabs that chewed Billy Ray's face and scything hooks that sliced it like bacon. Collins seemed to be counterpunching with pillows. By the end of the first round, Resto had pumped an angry welt under Collins' left eye, and in the third, Resto made it a matched set. After the fifth, Collins staggered back to his corner and told his father, "Daddy . . . it feels like he's got rocks in his gloves." In the seventh, the puffed-up cheek under Billy Ray's left eye split open into an ugly gash. CBS commentator Gil Clancy said sadly, "It's tough to see a young fighter in a fight like this—one fight like this can ruin a kid like Billy Collins." And still Resto marched forward, his hands hammering Collins' face. With about 40 seconds left in the 10th and last round, Collins caught a painful thumb in his right eye. He hunched over and withstood Resto's final assault. After the final bell Billy Ray reeled back to his father, dazed and bloody, as the crowd chanted, "Toro! Toro! Toro!" Luis Resto won by unanimous decision.

Jubilant, Resto waded across the suddenly crowded ring, almost in slow motion, to shake hands with his opponent's corner. He threw his arms around Billy Ray and hugged him, telling the young boxer that he had fought well. But when Resto shook hands with Billy Collins Sr., Billy Ray's father got a strong grip on Resto's right hand and wouldn't let go.

"All I felt were knuckles and fingers," Collins Sr. said later. There was a riotous commotion. An inspector grabbed Resto and marched him back to his dressing room, the winner's smile dead on his face.

Resto's Everlast gloves were cut from his hands and impounded. Small holes were discovered in the inside lining of each glove, and it was later determined that half of the animal hair padding had been illegally removed from both (the less padding, the more devastating the punch). Two weeks later, the New York State Athletic Commission held a private hearing on the case. After reviewing the testimony, John Prenderville, then Athletic Commission chairman, suspended indefinitely Resto's license to fight, and banned Panama Lewis and cornerman Pedro Alvarado from boxing for life. Resto's victory was changed to "no decision."

In January 1985, Luis Resto and Panama Lewis were indicted by a federal grand jury on charges of conspiracy, tampering with a sports contest, criminal possession of a weapon (a professional boxer's under-protected hand), and five counts of assault. The case was the foulest in New York boxing history since the Jake LaMotta-Billy Fox fix of 1947.

In April, however, a New York appeals court restored the licenses of Lewis, Resto, and Alvarado. The Appellate Division of the state Supreme Court, ruling that the Athletic Commission had proceeded improperly, or-

**Less than a year after his last fight, 22-year-old Billy Ray Collins was buried in Tennessee.**



IRISH

BILLY RAY COLLINS, JR.

A GREAT FIGHTER

1961 - 1984



dered a new hearing into the beating Resto gave Collins. The four-judge panel said that the commission failed to set the nature of the hearing, leveled no specific charges, and provided no statement of the legal authority and jurisdiction of the hearing.

#### Ode to Billy Ray

**W**HILE HIS FATHER STAYED AT the Garden to talk with officials, Billy Ray Collins was led across 7th Avenue to a bed in the Statler Hilton (now the Penta Hotel). His cut man sat by the bedside, keeping Billy Ray awake. Billy Ray was terrified that he would fall asleep and never wake up. He telephoned his pregnant teen-age wife, Andrea, back home in Antioch, a suburb of Nashville. "I'm beat up," he moaned to her. "I'm really beat up. I think I'm blind. My eyes are so swollen I can't see."

Friends and relatives drove to Nashville Municipal Airport the next evening for Billy Ray's homecoming. "I was expecting him to be beat up, but not what I saw," Andrea said later. "When he walked off the plane," recalled Mark Young, Billy Ray's best friend, "everybody's eyes and mouths just dropped. You could tell it was Billy, but it didn't look like him. You seen his daddy walking beside him. That's how you knew it was Billy."

According to Billy Collins Sr., his son went through seven ophthalmologists in rapid succession. The consensus was that Billy Ray had severe and permanent damage to his right eye (although a doctor at the Vanderbilt University Ambulatory Clinic suggested that the damage did not result from the fight against Resto but from "the trauma of multiple boxing matches and sparring during workouts"). "Irish" Billy Collins would never fight again.

Billy Ray was shattered. He had been boxing since he was 10 years old, in serious training since he was 13. His father, who had been in a match in Detroit's Cobo Hall when Billy Ray was born, had set up a training gym in their cramped cinderblock house. Billy Ray had fought right alongside the pit bulls his father raised out back. Fighting and living were synonymous around the Collins house. With his career suddenly finished, Billy Ray became suicidal.

Two months later Andrea gave birth to a baby daughter, straining the family budget. In September, Billy Ray got work as a temporary custodian in a bag factory on the north side of Nashville. The job ended in December. By January 1984 he was running low on cash, out of work except for a day or two a week loading trucks on a freight dock. He often sat in Mark Young's living room and watched a videotape of his fight with Resto. He began drinking more and more and squabbled heatedly with Andrea, sometimes



hitting her. She moved back to her parents' house in February, taking their baby daughter with her.

On March 6th, Billy Ray tossed off most of a pint of whiskey before getting into several arguments, one with his father, who cut Billy Ray's lip with a slap. Billy Ray clambered into his car and sped off into the crickets and the darkness, a friend, Johnny Duke, in the passenger seat. He missed a tight curve on Old Franklin Road, about a mile from his house, and sailed his car over the ribbon creek that runs alongside—and into a concrete abutment on the opposite bank. Duke squirmed out of the wreckage with cuts and bruises. Billy Ray Collins did not. He was dead at 22.

#### Inside Dope

**E**VEN PANAMA LEWIS' BIT-terest enemies concede that he is a masterful trainer. In an age when all of the sport's greatest trainers are over 70 and the art is dying out, Panama Lewis, 39, is one of the best trainers of his generation. He apprenticed under Chickie Ferrara, Freddy Brown, and the great Ray Arcel, working with boxers like Vito Antuofermo, Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, Nino Gonzales, and Roberto Duran (in 1980, Lewis was in Duran's corner when he upset Sugar Ray Leonard; and in 1981, Lewis worked 30 pounds off Duran in one month for his comeback). In the last few years Lewis hit the top of the fight game as Aaron Pryor's chief trainer.

Despite his expertise, Panama Lewis has

his detractors. Although no eyewitness has come forward to finger him as the one who unloaded Resto's gloves, Lewis' history as a trainer has been marred by controversy. Much of the dirt that has collected on Lewis' name came from the first Aaron Pryor-Alexis Arguello show-down.

It was late in that Junior Welterweight title bout, with Arguello ahead on many scorecards, when the network skipped the usual commercial between rounds to mike Pryor's corner. A cornerman held up a plastic water bottle for Pryor, and Panama Lewis was overheard ordering, "Not that one, the special bottle I mixed." When Pryor stormed back to win the championship on a 14th-round knockout, and no post-fight urinalysis was taken (for reasons that remain unclear), rumors flew like wild roundhouses, most of them mentioning amphetamines and cocaine. Lewis claimed that Pryor had an upset stomach and his mix merely consisted of Perrier and tap water. The late Artie Curley, who worked in Pryor's corner that night (and was later exonerated of any wrongdoing), said the bottle had contained "peppermint schnapps."

Panama Lewis is not without defenders. Jimmy Glynn, one of boxing's most respected trainers, hibernates in a small room at the back of his narrow bar, Jimmy's Corner, on West 44th Street in New York. Glynn, a bear of a man with huge hands as soft as glove leather, is convinced of Lewis' innocence. "Panama Lewis is being railroaded. He's the little guy and everybody else is making him the scapegoat. The D.A.,



**Resto gave Collins a brutal 10-round beating, and the next day this picture told the story.**



the Athletic Commission, Billy's father—they're all stacked against him. You've got to understand, the man worked with champions. Why would he pull something on a second-rate fight like this?"

**Whodunit?**

**A** REPORT FILED ON JUNE 28, 1983 (12 days after the fight), shows that Luis Resto's gloves were definitely tampered with by the time they reached the state police lab in upstate New York. The report notes similar holes, "three-quarters inch in diameter," in the closing lining of both gloves. Each glove weighed in at a shade under seven ounces. Since a pair of eight-ounce gloves is stuffed with two ounces of animal hair, the missing portion amounts to *half* of each glove's padding. What the lab could not pinpoint was when the gloves were altered.

Billy Collins Sr., who pushed for the indictment against Lewis and Resto from the beginning, made a strange statement to *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution* last January. "I had a gold mine, and they knew it," he told the *Journal's* Jack Wilkinson. "They didn't want me to have the mine. They wanted it. See, they're all in it with the gloves, from the boxing commission on down. They couldn't have done it otherwise. I'm not a fool. The New York State Athletic Commission was in on it. So was Top Rank [Bob Arum's promotional firm] and Teddy Brenner [Top Rank's matchmaker] and the referee [Tony Perez]. Panama Lewis couldn't have done that himself. He had nothing to gain from that. It was just another fight for Resto."

Collins backed up his wide-ranging accusations (which Teddy Brenner called "ridiculous") with an \$80 million civil lawsuit that names 17 defendants (including Top Rank, Teddy Brenner, Everlast, three Athletic

Commission inspectors, the referee, Lewis, Alvarado, and Resto) and a \$60 million lawsuit against the New York State Athletic Commission (which is already facing more than \$100 million worth of suits in other unrelated boxing cases). Both of these suits are still pending.

Is it possible that so many distinct parties could share complicity for one scandal? Is it possible that someone other than Panama Lewis altered the gloves or that Lewis was helped or even paid to tamper with Resto's gloves? Perhaps the only way to unravel this sordid knot is to follow the infamous gloves on their fateful journey.

Like most gloves, all of those used on the night of June 16 were made at Everlast's factory in the Bronx. Each set (two pair) was wrapped in an individual box and these were then packed into a large cardboard box. This box was delivered to room 444 of the Statler Hilton on June 14. It was received by Jay Edson, the fight coordinator for Bob Arum's Top Rank, the promoter who staged all of the fights on June 16.

Why are promoters, who have a vested interest in the outcome of every fight, responsible for the purchase and delivery of each match's gloves? A good question. Boxing promoters like Arum and Don King are strange phenomena. From the outside they appear to be consummate showmen, modern Barnums, entertaining the paying customers with their traveling one-ring circuses. But many insiders complain that promoters have their tentacles in too much of the action, that they have sucked free enterprise out of the system by becoming, in effect, shadow managers, and that they shuffle bodies like slavers through their tight oligarchic control of lucrative contracts and title shots. When they huddle with network experts like Ferdie Pacheco (NBC), Mort

Sharnik (CBS), and Jim Spence and Alex Wallau (ABC), promoters carry an unbeatable one-two punch of clout and money.

Among Top Rank's many agreements is one to supply fighters to ESPN. It is no coincidence that both "Irish" Billy Collins and

Luis Resto had appeared numerous times on the ESPN and had each won made-for-TV titles in their respective divisions on the cable station. Top Rank had actually promoted *all* of Billy Ray's fights. But Top Rank's involvement does not end there. When a promoter stages an evening of boxing he usually rents out the arena for the evening. This means that Top Rank was responsible for paying virtually everybody who came to work at Madison

Square Garden on the night of June 16, including security guards, maintenance people, special equipment assistants hired for the evening, and even the referees. There is something disturbingly claustrophobic about a promoter controlling the equipment, the fighters, and the arena's employees, even when no ulterior motives are alleged. But if Billy Collins Sr. was right in feeling that Top Rank was one of those trying to muscle in on his "gold mine," then the breadth of the promoter's involvement becomes highly suspect.

**Follow the Bouncing Gloves**

**J**AY EDSON INSISTED THAT THERE was nothing unusual about the box Everlast delivered to his room. "If something looks funny, you know, damaged, I might open it up and check the boxes inside. I've had to do that before. But there was no need in this case." Edson said that at about 3:00 on the day of the fights, Donald Hayes, a glove man hired by Top Rank for the specific task of distributing equipment to fighters (this was the first time Hayes had worked for Top Rank), arrived at Edson's hotel room and wheeled the Everlast box across the street to Madison Square Garden on a dolly.

Donald Hayes is as long and thin as a straight razor, a dapper dresser with a sharp mustache. He coaches boxers at Jimmy Glynn's Times Square Gym. "The box I picked up from Edson at 4:30 was fine," Hayes drawled, "but it was tied up with rope." (Chief inspector John Squieri had also described the box as being tied with rope before the Athletic Commission hearing.) This contradicted what Edson had said. Hayes added that the individual boxes were each sealed with tape, although he told the Athletic Commission that by the time he got them "all the boxes were, like, opened."



Hayes also told the Athletic Commission that Pedro Alvarado, Resto's cornerman, had signed for the gloves at a little "office" Hayes had set up near the fighters' dressing rooms (a receipt that Hayes subsequently threw away). It was primarily on the basis of this testimony that Alvarado's license had been revoked for life. Now Hayes says that he had later remembered he had actually given the gloves to Harold Weston Sr., an equipment manager, who then took them to Resto's dressing room.

Harold Weston Sr. denied Hayes' account categorically. "Donald Hayes didn't give no gloves to me," Weston said. "I gave them to him and he took 'em to the dressing room. Ask Ralphie Correa, he was there." But Ralph Correa, a third assistant hired by Top Rank for the fight, denied any knowledge of the gloves.

Julio Rivera, a trainer who was warming up his heavyweight, Carlos Hernandez, in the same dressing room Resto was using, tells an entirely different story. "I remember them coming into our room," Rivera said. "I remember there was Donald Hayes, Harold Weston, and Ralphie Correa. They had all the gloves in a bag, a white canvas bag with a drawstring. They just reached in and handed them out. That's the way it usually is. Nobody ever gets their gloves in a box."

Once Julio Rivera begins talking, he always has something interesting to say. Rivera said that on two separate occasions he had received gloves that had obviously been tampered with. "The first time was at the Felt Forum, August or September of 1983 (about two months after the Collins-Resto fight). I got the gloves from the glove man for my fighter, Pedro Maisonet, a junior lightweight. I saw that they were tampered with—they were cut open on the inside lining, both gloves. I called the inspector, Otero was his name. He exchanged them for me. The second time was in Las Vegas, at the Showboat. Carlos Hernandez was my fighter. Same thing, cut on the inside, very dangerous. I exchanged them." When asked if either he or the inspectors involved had reported the incidents to the presiding athletic commissions, Rivera smiled and shrugged his shoulders. "But I think maybe the same thing happened with Resto's gloves," he continued. "I know nothing happened in the dressing room. I was there the whole time."

#### Inside Dressing Room 4

**W**HEN THE LATE ARTIE Curley (the only man in Luis Resto's corner that night who was exonerated of any complicity in the scandal) testified at the Athletic Commission hearing, he repeatedly described Resto's dressing room as being overcrowded. "There were

three fighters in that room [and all of their handlers]. There was Resto, there was a heavyweight [Carlos Hernandez], and there was another fighter [T. K. Escalera] in there that was boxing on the show, and it's a small room. The room was very crowded. It was full of people there. In fact, there were people in there who don't even belong there."

Curley went on to testify that there was nothing wrong with Resto's gloves during the fight: "I mean, you are working with the fighter. You are giving him water. You are putting Vaseline on his face. He's right there in front of you. And if there is anything wrong with anything, you are going to notice it."

The man at the center of the scandal, Luis Resto, is a wiry Puerto Rican with a flattened nose and lumpy scar tissue above his eyes. When interviewed in the Fifth Avenue offices of his attorney, Lonn Berney (who also represents Lewis and Alvarado), Resto was sporting a black leather jacket and a pink sparring mouse under his right eye. Speaking in monosyllables, with an almost painful deliberation, he said that he had been too preoccupied with the pre-fight rituals of taping up his hands and shadow boxing—"trying to get loose"—to notice the arrival of the gloves.

However, when Resto was brought into the Manhattan D.A.'s office for questioning by five detectives on March 4, 1984 (two days before Billy Ray's death) he had told a different story. The following is excerpted from a transcript of that taped interrogation obtained by INSIDE SPORTS (a small portion of this information has appeared in a *New York Times* article by Michael Katz). It should be noted that Resto has recanted all information given during this interview, and his attorney has filed a motion to suppress the statements made during the questioning, partly because of what he termed "illegal methods used by the police." Berney said that Resto was coerced into saying what he thought the detectives wanted to hear by threats of jail and promises to reinstate his boxing license, and added that the investigating officers had, in effect, "taken a huge eraser to the Bill of Rights."

(Resto gave most of his answers in Spanish. They appear in translation below.)

*Resto: I put them [the gloves] there [on a chair], and they disappeared.*

*Detective Rodriguez: And they disappeared again . . . someone grabbed them again?*

*Resto: I believe so, yes.*

*Rodriguez: He [Panama] took 'em again?*

*Resto: Yeah . . . [inaudible] . . . Huh, they went to the bathroom. . . .*

*Sgt. Kidney: He went to the bathroom with the gloves? . . .*

*Resto: There were four people in the bathroom. . . .*

*Kidney: With Panama?*

*Resto: A black guy . . . and another Panamanian . . . [and] the other Puerto Rican . . . I know the black guy and I know Panama.*

*Kidney: You know the black guy?*

*Resto: Yeah.*

*Kidney: Who's the black guy?*

*Resto: Uh, Lee Black . . . [Lee Black denied having been in Luis Resto's dressing room at all that evening.]*

*Kidney: How long were they in the bathroom?*

*Resto: I don't know . . . [inaudible]*

*Rodriguez: It took quite a long time . . .*

*Kidney: When they came out of the bathroom . . .*

*Resto: Uh huh*

*Kidney: . . . was there an inspector in the room?*

*Resto: No.*

*Kidney: Was Hernandez [Carlos Hernandez] and his people [which would have included Julio Rivera] in the room?*

*Resto: Yeah, there were people there. Not too many, but . . .*

*Kidney: Was Alvarado in the room?*

*Resto: No, he went upstairs. . . .*

*Kidney: Did, did they say anything to you about it, about what they did?*

*Resto: No, they didn't say nothing to me. . . . I just told Panama what did you do to the gloves? Nothing, man, none of your business.*

*Kidney: None of your business.*

*Resto: Yeah. He told me I want you to win, that's all I want. . . .*

Later, Resto recalled that when the gloves were put on his hands "I felt something, like the gloves were, like split. . . ." but that he first realized there was something wrong after the fifth round. Resto also said that, about four months after the fight, the word got to him to say that nothing had happened, if he was asked. When the detectives asked if Panama had ever admitted to doctoring his gloves, Resto gave an answer that detective Rodriguez translated.

*Rodriguez: OK. [Panama] never admitted to him that he did it, but that someone else, that someone, somebody did it. That he himself never said, "I did it." [to Resto] He never told you who it was?*

*Resto: No, because says if they ask they're gonna know it was me, but . . . it was someone else that tampered with the gloves, that it wasn't me.*

(At one point, during the questioning, Resto denied that Lewis had fixed the gloves of any other fighters, saying, "With Pryor . . . it was the bottle . . . He gave him, like, like a mint juice . . . when you are tired, you drink this, it wakes you up . . . like in coke, like in cocaine.")

#### Watching the Detectives

Lonn Berney's charges of police misconduct become somewhat more credible upon

reading the following excerpt, which came near the end of the questioning:

**Kidney:** *How much money did you get for that fight, Louie?*

**Resto:** *Nine thousand dollars.*

**Rodriguez:** *I was surprised, you know, he told me nine thousand . . . Do you know how much Panama grabbed?*

**Sgt. Welch:** [bleeping] *Lewis, he was paid 15 or 20, [bleeping] Panama. . . . The guy who paid him, I talked to the guy, and the guy said he gave him 15 or 20—cash. . . . Not only did he [bleep] the gloves . . .*

**Resto:** . . . *I didn't see the contract, I saw the contract, but it said nine thousand.*

**Rodriguez:** *They gave you nine thousand, he was left with 11 thousand—your little friend, a friend of yours right?*

**Kidney:** *You see what happened, you got suspended, Alvarado got suspended, and he had nothing to do with it.*

**Resto:** *He had nothing to do with it.*

**Kidney:** [Panama] *took 11 grand out of you . . .*

**Rodriguez:** *Eleven thousand dollars he took out of your heart. And he says that . . . your friend. Look how amusing.*

**Kidney:** *Nice friends.*

Either the detectives were doing a convincing job of lying to Resto or someone made a very large, under-the-table payoff to

Panama Lewis. (Both Collins and Resto had signed contracts with Top Rank for \$10,000—a trainer's normal cut does not exceed 33.3%.) Teddy Brenner called any suggestion of such a payoff "bullshit." The detectives and the Manhattan D.A.'s office refused to speak about the matter.

If the account Luis Resto gave to the investigating officers was accurate, then what happened to the two Athletic Commission inspectors who had been assigned to watch each fighter glove up? John Prenderville, then-chairman of the Athletic Commission, has admitted that the inspectors, Richard Hering and Patrick Giovenelli, both left the room for about 10 to 15 minutes, reportedly to check with chief inspector John Squeri about a request from Panama Lewis to delay gloving Resto (Lewis denies this). When the pair returned, according to this account, Resto had already been gloved. Instead of ordering that the gloves be removed and put on again, as they should have, the inspectors let the lapse pass unchallenged.

Even though this account seems to be a great (and very costly) admission, there are still a lot of unanswered questions. Inspector Hering submitted an affidavit to the Athletic Commission which states that "Inspector Giovenelli and myself proceeded to examine

the gloves after being placed and bandaged to determine if they were new and without lacerations, abrasions, scuff marks, and if the laces and tape complied with the rules of the Commission. All gloves examined complied with the rules as promulgated." Surely an examination as seemingly thorough as the one Hering describes should have uncovered an irregularity as significant as *half* of the padding missing from *both* gloves, even if Hering and Giovenelli had not witnessed the actual gloving. It seems unbelievable that this pair left a room that they were assigned to supervise *together*, to relay a simple request (a task that anyone who was not a boxing inspector might be expected to perform solo), returned to find an event they were required to witness had already taken place, and, rather than making a thorough examination, gave a monstrously incompetent one instead. The ultimate responsibility for the inspectors' misdeeds lies squarely in the lap of John Squeri, chief inspector at the time, who was later fired under unexplained circumstances by a new Athletic Commission chairman. When asked about the chain of events, current Athletic Commission chairman Jose Torres said: "I'm amazed that nobody has questioned Squeri's role. You cannot dismiss him, because he was in charge—at the very least he was responsi-

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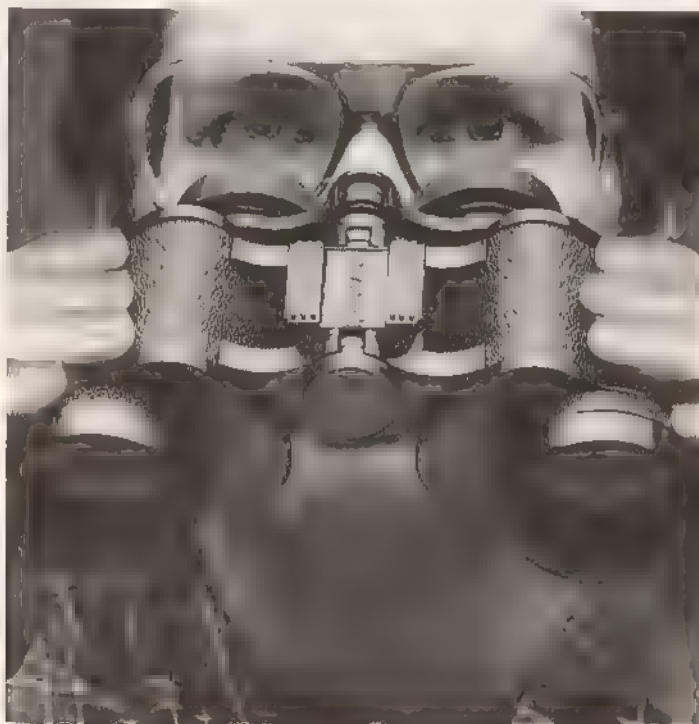
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**'I had a gold mine, and they knew it,' says Billy Collins Sr.**

ble for the other inspectors." Unfortunately, Squieri's present whereabouts are unknown.

The only other man who inspected the gloves before the fight was the referee, Tony Perez. He testified at the Athletic Commission hearing that, although it was his job to "see if nothing is wrong with the gloves and to see also there is no foreign or detrimental substances in the gloves," he had only "touched the gloves," but "not in their entirety." After further questioning, Perez admitted that "I didn't feel them at all."

None of these officials were disciplined in any way.

Irregularities did not end with the fight. After Billy Collins Sr.'s complaints, chief inspector Squieri marched Resto back to his dressing room, where the gloves were cut off

Resto's hands. Squieri walked out of the dressing room with the gloves under his arm and Billy Collins Sr. at his side. Squieri eventually took the gloves to Athletic Commission chairman John Prenderville, who was standing in a foyer outside the arena. Prenderville happened to be chatting with Daniel Gollumb, the chairman of Everlast (the manufacturer of the gloves). Squieri then took the gloves to Jack Graham, another Athletic Commission official, who reportedly put them in the trunk of his car, where they spent the night. Torres said that there are still no written procedures for cases like this, and Prenderville confirmed that to be the case. "We were playing it by ear."

Why it never occurred to any of the A.C.

officials to have the gloves properly impounded by the police, or at the very least put them in an Athletic Commission safe for the night, is anybody's guess. "That's the fight game for you," laughed Bert Sugar, the ex-editor of *Ring*, who has been called the only honest man in boxing. "At least Graham didn't leave them on his front seat."

#### **"The Choice of Champions"**

**I**NSTEAD OF SENDING RESTO'S gloves directly to the state police laboratory for analysis, Prenderville ordered that they be given to Everlast. The error of the decision becomes apparent when one learns a little more about the Everlast Sporting Goods Manufacturing Company. In order to imagine Everlast's iron-fisted grip on the estimated \$20-80 million a year boxing equipment market, picture McDonald's without Burger King or AT&T before MCI.

One of the primary complaints centers on the animal hair Everlast uses to stuff its gloves. Over a period of use, this padding can work away from a fighter's knuckles, bunching up on the back of the hand and near the fingertips, *creating the same effect as removing padding from the glove*. Unscrupulous trainers can even do this intentionally by rubbing and kneading Everlast gloves (Luf Wear gloves, which are stuffed with foam-rubber padding, are immune to this effect). In fact, this may be an effect that can be created all too easily.

Obviously, this potential would be compounded if a fighter was issued a pair of used gloves. Although others have testified to the contrary, Julio Rivera claims that the gloves he received for his fighter that night were used. "I could tell because of the sweat and the Vaseline in them. We are given used gloves most of the time. And they handed all of the gloves out of the same bag—they didn't separate out new and used gloves—so Luis Resto probably got used gloves too."

Five full days after Everlast received Luis Resto's gloves, the gloves were driven to their final destination, the state police laboratory in Newburgh, N.Y. By this time the gloves has passed through so many people that there was no guarantee that the gloves now marked "R" for Resto were actually his. Even though there are specific serology tests that might have been able to determine this for certain, these tests were not performed by the lab's forensic analyst. Another test that was skipped, called a neutron activation analysis, might have been able to identify the instrument used to cut open the lining of the gloves.

#### **An Ignoble Tradition**

**T**HE CRUELEST IRONY UNDERLYING this whole affair is that Luis Resto could have beaten Billy Ray

Collins in a fair fight. Bert Sugar describes Collins as a "catcher," meaning that he used his face as a backstop. "His best punch was a chin to the right fist," said Sugar between puffs on a cigar. "Of course, you have to understand that unloading gloves is part of a long and ignoble boxing tradition. Bob Fitzsimmons did it against Jim Jeffries, and Tommy Ryan used to lighten his gloves as well. But the one who perfected it first was 'Kid' McCoy, the dirtiest fighter of all time. Boxing gloves haven't changed that much in the last 80 years, and McCoy, who fought at the turn of the century, was notorious for rearranging the animal hair padding to create a devastating punch."

But the best argument in Panama Lewis' defense is not Resto's superiority but Lewis' lack of a discernible motive. Prenderville said that he suspected a large bet on the fight, but when he had police check Las Vegas and Atlantic City immediately afterward, they found nothing suspicious. A victory over the untested Collins would not have done anything great for Resto's future either—he was a known commodity, "an opponent at best," as Arum called him. Because Resto was fighting over his normal weight, he and Lewis even had a built-in excuse in case of a defeat. But the most compelling consideration is Lewis' career, which, as Aaron Pryor's head trainer, was peaking.

The Billy Collins debacle could not have come at a worse time for boxing. The sport is on the ropes, under a vigorous and spreading attack spearheaded by the American Medical Association. Because boxing has no organized lobby like other major sports, we may well be witnessing the last waltz of the fight game. Fervent supporters are the first to admit that boxing has been its own worst enemy. As this particular case illustrates in sordid detail, the people who control the sport have proved absolutely incapable of policing it. As a result, its image is irretrievably tainted.

All of this was prophesied in the last scene of the 1956 black-and-white classic, "The Harder They Fall" (based on the novel by Budd Schulberg). After being sucked into the underhanded deals of a slimy promoter (played by Rod Steiger), Humphrey Bogart parks in front of his trusty manual typewriter to bang out an article that will either force the creation of a federal boxing commission or get boxing outlawed in the United States, even "if it takes an act of Congress to do it." If he was sitting in front of his typewriter today, Bogie would have proceeded to write this story. ■

MICHAEL CARUSO, a New York City writer and reporter, spent almost a year researching and writing this article.

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# The Day 'Kid Magic' Turned Blue

*Vida Blue burst upon the scene firing lightning, but he was routed by bolts bigger than his own. Now he's back, because he learned they don't play baseball in hell*

**By Peter Korn**

*"You ask what's different about me. The answer is I'm older. Maybe I'm getting too old."—Vida Blue at 24*

**O**UR HEROES. WE HOLD SUCH lofty expectations of them. As if their future is ours simply because their realities embody our dreams. We judge, we pity, and we condemn, and we bring such pressure to bear that at 24 years of age, an intelligent, talented, healthy young man can actually feel he is too old.

There's a place, farther away in the mind than the heart, where exist the baseball careers that didn't happen.



Herb Score is there. He never took a blinding line drive in the eye—Gil McDougald struck out instead, as he should have. Dick Allen is there. A contented soul, he harnessed his unequaled natural ability in a career that left those fans who live for baseball out of breath. There are others in our pantheon—Dizzy Dean and J. R. Richard, Satchel Paige and Josh Gibson. And there is Vida Blue, smiling, laughing, growing older not quite gracefully, because the forever young know a different sort of grace—but spendidly, like an aging actor changing his roles but not his character. Cary Grant in a uniform.

He was like “wheat in the field,” Reggie Jackson tells us, “natural, beautiful, untouched.” His talent was more than talent, but power, and when he stood out on the mound and prepared to throw another baseball to no spot more specific than over the plate, we all rejoiced in the purity of the scene, the clarity with which so little of life allows itself to be understood anymore.

It is inconceivable that Vida Blue was (is) an alcoholic, was busted for possession of cocaine, spent 81 days in federal prison. It is inconceivable that Vida Blue, now near the end of his career, is still struggling for his 200th win. Hell, it's inconceivable that Vida Blue is 35 years old. His was always an image, a charisma, firmly rooted in the beauty of youth.

This is a story about a man, but it is not his alone. Sports writers, fans, owners—we all live through the athlete, and we believe the distance is enough to absolve us of any responsibility when the story takes an unfortunate turn. We are like lovers who are careful not to get too close, even as the words of passion spill out of our mouths. But Vida Blue's story is our story, the events of his life are as much a result of societal forces as the choices he took. Vida Blue has always been a man playing by someone else's rules.

Only the most gifted are weighed down with our burdens, as if physical and intellectual gifts somehow make a man stronger, when in fact it is often the other way around. Vida Blue was gifted. He was also black, from a small, backward Southern town, and young of heart and soul. We pushed him to achieve but never gave him room or time to grow, to mature, and then we all feigned surprise when the promise wasn't fulfilled.

Vida Blue is back, pitching for the San Francisco Giants. This story will tell you where he's been.

**D**OES ANYONE KNOW WHAT it's like to feel invincible? In the flush of youth, on the threshold of the real world, it is not uncommon to feel as if you can do anything, that there are no limits to your reach. When Vida Blue felt this way he was 22 years old and an entire country was telling him that it was so, the dream was real. So he believed it.

When he was 10, Vida Blue wanted to swim in the Mansfield, La., public swimming pool. He couldn't; he was black.

When he was 23, Vida Blue wanted to have some choice in whom he worked for and how much he was paid. He couldn't; he was a ballplayer.

When he was 26, Vida Blue wanted to experience New York City as a star athlete, having just been traded to the Yankees by Oakland. He couldn't; the commissioner of baseball ruled the trade not to be in the best interests of baseball.

When he was 34, Vida Blue just wanted to play baseball. He couldn't; the commissioner suspended him because he had been convicted of drug possession.

Oh, but when he was 22, the power and the glory had never been so manifest in a baseball player. No trickery, no deceit, just a big, strong kid throwing the ball as hard as he could. And still, the vaunted major league hitters couldn't catch on—they knew what was coming but they couldn't hit it. “The ultimate fastball,” Johnny Sain called it.

He arrived in 1970 just to tease us, called up at the end of the year by Oakland A's owner Charlie Finley for just six games. A tease. In September he no-hit the Twins.

And then came 1971. The statistics speak well, but not nearly as eloquently as the memories, the images held by all who saw Vida Blue in 1971. He was as nearly unhittable as a pitcher can be, the league's Most Valuable Player. In his rookie season Blue went 24-8 with an ERA of 1.82, 312 innings pitched, with 301 strikeouts and only 209 hits allowed. He would never again have so many as 200 strikeouts in a season.

Bobby Grich remembers scratching out a hit on a day when the Orioles managed only three against the young Blue, who bested Jim Palmer. In the locker room Grich explained to a sports writer that he had hit a fastball. The next day the writer informed Grich that Blue claimed the pitch was just a hanging curve. “He was throwing so hard that his hanging curve to me was like a fastball,” Grich says.

Doug DeCinces remembers the competitiveness that was as much a part of the young Vida Blue as the power or the youthful vitality. “He always was coming at you, he'd never back down. When he struck you out you knew he was giving you his best stuff. If

you got a base hit off of him, he even acknowledged the fact. ‘Well, you hit my good pitch, but I'm going to get the next guy.’” A nod over to first base, or a smile, would serve as Blue's honorable recognition.

Reggie Jackson has a slew of 1971 memories as Blue's teammate in Oakland, and all revolve around individual confrontations. There was Billy Cowan being quoted that Blue wasn't as good as Koufax, and striking out five times the next game without so much as a foul ball. Or Brant Alyea, swinging a hot bat early in the year and hitting a triple off Blue early in the game. Jackson recalls trotting out to right field a couple of innings later as Blue was running to the mound, the pitcher saying two words, “Watch this.” Alyea went out on three pitches, but it was the power of those pitches, the fact that Alyea had absolutely no chance at them, that focuses the memory for Jackson.

Blue's memory of 1971 is elicited by a quiz on his statistics. The won/lost record comes easily, and guesses at games started and innings pitched are almost exact. When it comes to recalling the strikeouts there's not a moment's hesitation, not a digit out of place—each of those 301 is firmly enshrined. Then the pitcher asks, “How many bases on balls? I'm going to say 120.” The answer is 88 and Blue goes into momentary shock. “Oh my God, oh my God. When you feel as though you can just throw the ball by the hitters, you don't even think about aiming for the outside corner. You're invincible. You just do it. Oh my.”

He was invincible that year, if not in all baseball games at least in spirit. A little boy's spirit that became his bane and his glory at the same time. He had a charisma, but it was the kind of charisma that just sort of happened, as opposed to the spotlight that is claimed and defended by others, say a Reggie Jackson, who has always gone out of his way to seek public attention and to profit by it. Vida Blue was just a little kid who radiated joy. He was every child who ever donned a Lone Ranger mask or Superman cape and fused the purity of youth with the power of great strength. It wasn't just that Vida Blue had the power, but that he seemed so childlike, so innocent in its grasp.

The public saw the innocence, but they failed to understand that there was a questioning mind behind the unworldliness. Here was a man who was ashamed of his small hometown, so awed was he by what he saw happening around him. “I used to cheat and tell players I was from Shreveport, La.,” he recalls. “Because when you look in one of those media guides everyone is from Los Angeles or San Francisco or Miami Beach or Portland. And there isn't anybody from Mansfield, La.”





**E**VEN IN HIS YOUTH, THE model child and star athlete, the pride of Mansfield, had been questioning, and keeping the thoughts to himself. "It was frustrating for me at one time. I wanted to know why I couldn't drink out of the same water. They used that term 'colored.' They would have this one lead pipe, and it would branch off and it would say white, and colored over here. It was the same water."

And this unworldly, maybe slightly intimidated black man-child was snatched into a world of wealth and glamour—a world he was totally unprepared for.

What Vida Blue would not discover, at least not right away, was that he was doing little more than playing a role, the role of Kid Magic. It's almost as if there's a mantle passed on every five years or so, a burdensome mantle. Kid Magic—the first year pitching phenom. Herb Score wore it briefly, and Mark Fidrych and Wayne Simpson and Fernando Valenzuela. Once every five or 10 seasons a pitcher makes his debut in the major leagues, and for a moment, sometimes lasting two months and sometimes as long as two years, he appears to be not only better than everybody else, but different. Dwight Gooden is the new Kid Magic. Baseball observers are secure in the knowledge that Gooden will continue to dominate batters and teams as he did last year. Nothing can stop his march to baseball immortality. He is unbeatable.

If Kid Magic is a role, Vida Blue was the most memorable of the actors. And he, more than any of the others, was to know the oppression of this casting. In his moment, he appeared every bit as untouchable, to have hold of the same magic, as Dwight Gooden. In time, the magic slipped through his fingers like the white powdered substance—cocaine—that contributed to his downfall.

When a man makes a mistake, he pays for the transgression and the matter is closed. When a legend errs, the incident is never forgotten. A legend is merely history that has attached to itself a bit of magic, and so the episode attaches itself to the legend and in time may become the legend. Vida Blue has enjoyed a prodigious baseball career, but right now his legend is that of Vida Blue, near-great pitcher who was sent to prison for drug possession.

Vida Blue's downfall was in the power, because knowing it at too young an age, the power took control of him instead of the other way around. Legends need time to develop, like love, if they are to survive intact. Those that are established too quickly come with a penchant for self-destruction, for burning themselves out in the fires of their own passion.

At 22 he was the best in the world at the



**In his awesome rookie season, Vida blew away 301 batters.**

thing that defined him. At 23 he was in tears. Constantly. Maybe it would have been different if he had been forced to work for it, if the reward were the result of diligence and ardor. But it all came too easily for Blue. The ability was a gift, not a reward, and so Blue was put in the position of the young man who knows inherited wealth, but lacks the fiber gained from hard-earned riches.

"At this very moment I wish I would have done that little extra, those little extra things that would have made me a better ball-player," Blue says, reflecting on what might have been. "It was a strike against me to have natural ability. I didn't have to practice. I know that practice is a part of a routine and preparation for a game, but I never had to lift weights and ride the bicycle and do all that stretching. Today, when it comes to stretching I can stretch with ease, and I've never gotten pulled muscles and stuff."

"I think to have natural ability caused a thought pattern that I don't have to work as hard, because I could naturally do stuff."

These regrets have caught up to Blue as the numbered days of his athletic career

stare at him from the near distance. For a man who receives his sense of worth from his athletic ability, and who respects the statistical benchmarks of that ability—200 wins, 2,000 strikeouts—that little extra that might have gained him a Hall of Fame career is put into a lifetime focus. Making the Hall of Fame would provide Blue an emotional fortune, but he's probably a little bit short. Those 200 wins and 2,000 strikeouts are a major reason for his pitching this year, and their realization might garner a few more Hall of Fame votes years from now. And whether he admits it or not, Blue is going to care very much about those votes someday.

**I**N 1970, THOUGH, THOUGHTS OF the Hall of Fame or even next year were phantoms, hardly worth the time spent considering them. Blue's sights were centered on Oakland and nothing else:

"Most of the parent clubs paint a picture for the players within the organization on the minor league level of what it's like to be in Dodger Stadium and wearing Dodger blue, for example. And the Oakland A's talk about

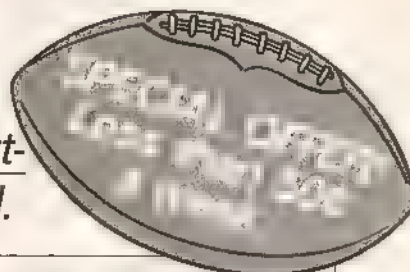


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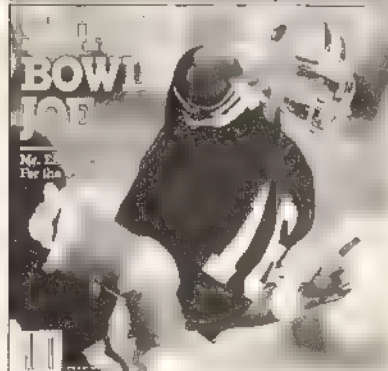
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the green-and-gold carpet that's on the dressing room floor. My goal was to make it to the big leagues and be on that green-and-gold carpet. I was so naive."

Nineteen-seventy-two would challenge that naiveté and destroy the illusions of youth. After his magical first year, Blue and Finley could not come to terms on a new contract. The player's springtime holdout became a national event, a comic opera, and the new role the player unintentionally assumed carried with it overtones of greed.

Blue claimed he was quitting to join a plumbing supply firm, Finley refused to pay his new star more than \$50,000. It all sounds routine today, when negotiations and player-management relations differ little from those of any other industry. But baseball was still a sport back then, or at least people still believed it to be. Even the fact that Blue had an agent (Robert Gerst) represent him in the negotiations riled Finley.

Eventually, Blue signed for the \$50,000 with a \$13,000 bonus, up from \$14,750 for his rookie year. But it was Vida Blue, not Kid Magic, who returned to the A's clubhouse that April.

Dick Williams was the A's manager. He remembers the loss of innocence with the clear vision of a man who has seen what happens to those who play little boy's games in a man's world.

"He didn't say too much in the clubhouse," Williams recalls. "He had a good time. But from day one when they had that contract stuff, that's when he started changing. He was always a quiet guy, but he used to have fun in the clubhouse." When he came back, Williams says, Blue stopped having fun.

"He was hurt, he was burned, you could say, by the cruel real world. He was outgoing in a quiet way before and this soured him on growing up. It would be better to be a youngster all the time," Williams says.

That is why the little boy, one of Vida Blue's most endearing qualities, remained so long. Most of us wish for that, to retain that part of us as we grow older. For some, that is what baseball is all about, a return to childhood. But little boys can be scarred just as easily as men.

Reggie Jackson recalls how this change in attitude reflected itself in Blue's appearance. "He was going to do it his way," Jackson says. "He would travel in jeans, a pair of thongs, and a T-shirt. Before, he'd always been a very conservative, well-dressed guy."

It wasn't the money that embittered Blue, it was a slow-moving realization that took the young pitcher much too completely by surprise.

"I didn't have a true understanding of what the whole system of baseball was about," he says.

Blue wanted Charley Finley to appreciate him, to reward him for winning and for the attendance records he set every time he pitched at home and on the road. He still thought baseball was a team game—he drew the fans and the owner shared the wealth. "I didn't understand that that's the way business works. You're exploited. They get what they can out of you, then they turn the page," he says.

The 1972 record looks almost as ugly and out of place on Blue's entry in the *Baseball Register* as his 1983 statistics. Blue went 6-10 that year, although his ERA was only 2.80. Still, after the historic 1971 campaign, and then the holdout, the whispers were not kind.

The hard, quick dose of reality had taken a toll on Blue's personal life, and it was unreasonable to expect it would not also affect his pitching. "It's good for the player to be aware of it [contract negotiations], but it's bad for him because he goes out pitching, thinking that 'I've got to win this game.' He's counting money as he's pitching."

If Blue had come along a few years later, the trauma might have been avoided. The 1970s were a transition era in baseball, and the rules regarding money and players rights were changing. Soon free agency would arrive, and a dramatic transformation in the salary structure. The old way held that only through length of service was a generous salary earned. Willie Mays and Ernie Banks got in the high five figures, not some hotshot rookie. Blue was a second-year man whose value as a player nobody could dispute, and he wanted to be compensated accordingly. By today's standards, he would be. One good year and a lot of promise (note Floyd Banister) make a player a sought-after commodity now.

Today, ballplayers don't get as emotionally involved in their contract negotiations, either. In 1972 agents were a novel idea, and though Blue retained one, it was still mostly the pitcher and Finley involved in face-to-face confrontation, at the commissioner's insistence. Today, Blue recognizes that if an agent could have handled the whole issue he might have been able to stay emotionally detached. "And I really would have continued to have the sweet taste that I did have for baseball," he says. "The fact that I had to hold out—I think that was the whole thing that really upset me."

Dick Williams recalls a vivid picture of Blue at spring training in 1972, wanting desperately to work out with his teammates but not allowed to do so, like a little boy with his nose pressed against the window at the candy shop.

Even an embittered Blue had his sustenance. He still had the fastball, and if 1972 was so unlike 1971, out on the mound there



were moments that seemed just the same.

"I remember pitching a game in Kansas City where I just felt like, 'OK, I can strike anybody out that even comes up to the plate,'" Blue recalls. "It's almost like being unconscious. Even today I still have flashbacks of that. Today there was a situation—it happened in my first inning. Ron Cey is a thinker, he knows when a pitcher's going to challenge him and when he's not going to let him—he's a game-breaker. The score was 0-0, he was the first batter, and he realized I wasn't going to come in and give him a pitch to pull and hit over the fence, so he just went with the pitch to right field. So I gave him that, he out-thought me that time.

"The second hitter, Jody Davis. I get two quick strikes on him. I'm living in that 1971 feeling right there. So I say, 'I got you now. I have two strikes, no balls on this guy, I don't have to make a perfect pitch.' Ever since 1971 I've been a firm believer that I ain't going to waste nothing. When I come inside, I'm not trying to brush you back, I'm trying to throw for the inside corner and get you the hell out of there. Anyway, I got cocky with myself, and instead of making the pitch a little on the outside I just said, 'OK, here it is.' He hit another line drive to right field."

It's an illusion, a deceptive flashback, because it can lead to a false confidence, one based not on reality but on a past reality.

"I wish I could find the words to express how it felt," Blue says about that 1971 feeling. "You don't care who comes to the plate, you know that you can literally throw the ball by them. The guy doesn't have a chance." And that feeling is still enough to feed Blue's sense of worth. Blue has never found anything that made him feel as good, as comfortable, as athletic success.

**E**VEN WITHOUT THE CONTRACT hassles and resultant scars, 1972 was sure to follow 1971, as Valenzuela, Fidrych, and all the other Kid Magics can attest. The invincibility never lasts, at least not without changing form. Billy Connors, the Cubs pitching coach, thinks the phenomenon is based on a hitter's need to feel comfortable with a pitcher. Knowing what a pitcher might throw is a part of it, and so is the knowledge of how wild he might be. But it's more than that, Connors insists. A batter facing a pitcher develops a relationship in his mind, and until he knows that relationship well enough to feel comfortable, he hits uncomfortably—which means poorly.

Blue remembers the process as one of taking leave of the gifts that had produced his success. "It takes awhile for the rest of the league to adjust to you. You're a new kid on the block, you've come along with all that youth and power, and all of a sudden you

begin to get into the technical aspect of the game instead of just going out there and playing on natural ability. A lot of this game is your natural ability, and all of a sudden you start thinking about what the pitcher's going to throw you instead of just looking for the ball, or the pitcher begins to think about what the hitter's looking for instead of just trying to throw the ball."

Blue says he started thinking too much in 1972. "I went from 24-8 to 6-10 and I used to go home and cry a lot."

If 1972 produced tears, 1973 offered vindication. It wasn't Kid Magic that produced a 20-9 record, it was a determined young man who thought that if he threw hard enough, he just might throw a chip off his shoulder. The ERA was 3.27 and the strikeouts about half of the 1971 total, but by the measure of his heart, Vida Blue was a complete success.

"In my mind it was my best season," Blue says of the first of what would be many comeback years. "The bottom line of my attitude was to do good again, and let's see who's going to be your friend, and now it's going to be my turn to reject those people who weren't there in 1972." Even now, in the telling, Blue's voice changes as he reviews the first three years of his baseball life. When he speaks of 1971, there is wonder. When 1972 is the subject, there is hurt. But when Blue talks about 1973, bitterness seeps out of his voice like a hiss from a wounded animal.

At the age of 23, vindication may have been good for his head, but how about Blue's soul? "I felt good with myself because I was 23 years old and my attitude was, 'OK, I'll show them now,'" Blue recalls. "To win 20 games is the ultimate for every pitcher, and to do that is like, 'Now I've got them eating out of my hand.' That was my attitude, being the brash young man that I was.

"I had gotten a grip on what was happening around me as far as the job itself. I knew my attitude was changing about my overall perspective of baseball—that business/game thing—it wasn't a game to me anymore. It was *all* business. I'm pitching and playing for the money." Blue pauses a moment, and the bitterness fades away, with the little boy reappearing, leaving one to wonder if one is real and the other a mask. "But deep down inside me I know I love baseball," he says. "I know within myself I couldn't go out there and pitch and count my money. That's no fun."

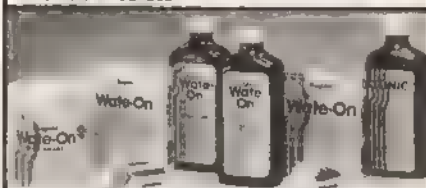
What 1973 offered Blue was a different kind of satisfaction than 1971 had provided. Nothing shows this better than the strikeout totals, so firmly settled into a region of Blue's brain reserved for special memories. There were 301 in 1971 and 158 in 1973. To Blue, each one of those is significant, not just an athletic achievement but the wellspring of a

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**V**IDA BLUE HAS NEVER FOUND anything that made him feel as good as blowing a fastball past a helpless batter, no emotional attachment, affection, or love has been able to compete. Friendship hasn't even come close. When the demons have set in on Vida Blue, the one means he always possessed to turn them away was his athletic prowess. And when that began to fail him, there was drinking and drugs.

Blue's years with the A's played themselves out with a consistency that few remember. From 1973 to 1977 the lefthander averaged 18 victories a year, and his ERA never topped 3.83. Even the following three years with San Francisco proved Blue to be a reliable pitcher, as he won 46 games. It is a case of legend obscuring history.

There is a fundamental difference in the way players and fans perceive baseball. Fans see an athlete's career as a series of still photographs—here's Vida Blue in 1971, a vivid, heroic image. Then the embittered 1972 Blue comes to mind, and soon thereafter, that is replaced by the picture of Blue in the news and in prison, and finally the latest snapshot, Vida Blue back in baseball. But ballplayers tend to see their comrades' careers more as a continuous motion picture. Ask Tommy John his opinion of Vida Blue and he will speak with complete admiration. One great season doesn't make a career, John knows. But any ballplayer who can play in the big leagues 15 seasons, as Blue has, earns respect.

So the Vida Blue who continued to pitch in Oakland was changed, but still effective. Finley "soured my stomach," Blue says, calling upon the same phrase he used repeatedly 13 years ago. The owner failed to see how much pride was a part of the young ballplayer who was packing his stands. Finley even thought he could buy Blue's name, gaining publicity when he offered the 22-year-old \$5,000 to change his name to True Blue. The owner never knew the insult Blue took in the act. Vida comes from the Spanish word for life, and it was his father's name.

There was a lot Charlie Finley never knew about Vida Blue. From 1972 on, the pitcher refused to shake Finley's hand. The A's became world champions three times, and after each of those seasons a victory parade was held through downtown Oakland. Blue never attended one of those celebrations,

**'I didn't have an understanding of how baseball works. You're exploited. They get what they can out of you, and then they turn the page.'**

despite threats made by various members of the A's administration. "It was another way that I felt I could get back and spite him," Blue says.

"I started thinking about what I could do to hurt this guy," Blue recalls. "At one time I used to keep a pen in my pocket and I used to number baseballs, throw them in the stands. I lost count of the number of balls I threw away. I think I got to maybe 250."

But Finley could do much worse to Blue by taking away the joy of baseball, the pitcher's only refuge. And when he ruined that joy, Finley was not punishing the man, but the little boy, the best part of Vida Blue. So it was the little boy in Blue who tried so hard to lash out.

August 1977 was the last time Blue talked to Finley, and the hostility was still there. The team was no longer the same—gone were Jackson and Bando and Campaneris and Rudi. Piccolo, Gross, and Page had taken their place. In 1977, Blue pitched respectably, a 3.83 ERA, but his record stood at 14-19. The little boy, still hurting, saw one last chance to get even. "I remember it was my turn to start the last game of the season, in which the manager was Bobby Winkles. And I told him no way was I going to pitch. I wasn't going to be on the reverse end of a 20-game season."

In 1978, Blue found himself out from under Finley, the result of a trade to San Francisco, and the pitcher is still puzzled at his reaction to the change. Considering his feelings toward Finley and the A's, he should have seen the move as a godsend. Instead, while he was glad to get away and had requested a trade on two occasions, Blue still felt sorrow when it came time to leave. He was like a young man leaving a bad family situation. Oakland had been Blue's only adult home, he had grown up there, not necessarily in all the ways he would have wished. "That was the only family I needed as far as my baseball life

goes," Blue says. "A lot of my life is in Oakland, with that Oakland team."

**T**HE TRADE TO THE GIANTS provided another opportunity for vindication, and Blue responded to the challenge. A slider entered his repertoire and an 18-10 record, with a 2.79 ERA, told the baseball world that the magic hadn't left completely. Blue was named National League Pitcher of the Year in 1978. But by 1979, inexplicably, the sweetness dissolved again into an acrid mixture of self-pity and despair. Alcohol had always provided solace. Now cocaine began to work its dismal magic on the man who had always created his own. Blue isn't sure how it happened, how the beers led to heavy drinking, or the experiments with cocaine to dependency. "Nineteen-seventy-nine might have been the first year after 1972 that I began to bring my job home with me and the pouting and the crying," he recalls. But the process was not so much the drowning of a poignant hurt as being caught in a downward spiral that seemed to keep him in its clutches, not through pain as much as temptation.

Searching for understanding of what happened the last five years of his life does not come easily for Blue; it is unnatural for a man who has made a life based on doing what came naturally. There are few precise moments to hold up to the light, moments of change. The snapshots desert him now, and the years seem too much like that motion picture, played back too fast.

Vida Blue did not arrive in baseball that heroic season of 1971, he captured it, and with it a nation's imagination. Gray-haired ladies who knew him only from the six o'clock news fell in love with his name and his nature. Twenty-year-old lovelies fell in love with his fame. Owners of baseball teams fell in love with his talent. But there was nobody to love Vida Blue.

His family in Louisiana loved him, but they didn't know him anymore. As with any young man who leaves home to start his own life, there appeared two Vida Blues, each living up to the expectations of different people. The boy always had lots of support, the man never enough. When asked who knows him best in this world, his first response is mother. After a pause he adds, "I've often told my family they really don't know me and I really don't know them, because of the gap that has taken place since I've become a professional athlete."

For a year or two the calls home to Momma continued. When they stopped, to be replaced by conversations with the woman who would dominate his personal life for the next 10 years, the ties to home would be lost.

Nathalie Smith was the woman who came

to know a man who bore little resemblance to either the media personification or the Louisiana family's outdated image. Blue and Smith met in 1971, tried to share a life but never fully could.

Smith describes Blue as a confused man, and nearly alone. "I'm the closest thing to a friend he's had. He hasn't really had any friends, because he never really trusted anyone," she says. Even now, with the distance of three years, the memories don't come easily for her.

At first Blue didn't need anybody, Smith explains, the world was his friend in 1971. It was different in 1972. By the end of that year, according to Smith, the pitcher was spending time alone in bars, sometimes coming home drunk. Smith likens the next 10 years to a Dr. Jekyll/Mr. Hyde experience.

"He is a charming person who can put people at ease," she says. "I can't say he's a friendly, outgoing guy. He puts on a performance for people. He can be to you whatever you want him to be. That's Vida." Maybe that's what comes of living up to the expectations of others for too long.

Blue doesn't contradict the image portrayed by Smith. "I'm a very private person," he says, knowing it goes way beyond privacy. "Nobody really knows me. I used to date a lot of girls. Each one of those girls served a purpose and played an important role in my life. I've told several girls, if I found that she was getting too close to me I would break off the relationship. And I have done that."

The same is true with friends. Vida Blue doesn't have a true companion in this world. Ballplayers tend to befriend ballplayers, but not Blue. "They [other players] can tell you what type of a baseball player I am, but as a person I'm the invisible man. No one ever sees me."

Blue has structured a unique personal life. He is a fortress. There are outside battlements to keep the world at a safe distance, but even those people he allows inside the castle never breach the final walls. The construction of those walls is a mystery; Smith claims they are a mixture of insecurity and distrust. To ask Blue about them is to wonder. He is the ultimate loner and he says, "I feel good about that, strange as it may sound."

He also feels good about the fact that only three ballplayers have ever been invited to his secluded Oakland home. Blue truly is alone and invisible. Ask him who else a writer might talk to to better understand Vida Blue and every suggestion is followed by "but he didn't really know me."

Even Smith hesitates when labeling Blue as insecure. "He is, but he accepts himself," she explains. "That's just that way I am," he always used to say."

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- #57 July 5, 1969. Indians (Hargan) vs. Yankees (Bahnsen).
- #58 July 12, 1970. Yankees (Stottlemyre) vs. Senators (Hannan).
- #59 July 5, 1970. 1st game of DH, Senators (Bosman) vs. Yankees (Peterson).
- #60 July 17, 1970. Oakland As (Hunter) vs. Yankees (Stottlemyre).
- #61 The 1971 All-Star Game played at Detroit.
- #62 Game 7, 1971 Series. Pirates (Blass) vs. Orioles (Cuellar).
- #63 July 11, 1971. Red Sox (Culp) vs. Yankees (Peterson).
- #64 Aug. 12, 1971. 2nd game of DH, Angels (Murphy) vs. Yankees (Kekich).
- #65 Aug. 8, 1971. Braves (Phil Niekro) vs. Mets (Williams).
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**'Deep down, I know I couldn't go out there and pitch and count my money. That's no fun.'**

The thing about declaring that's the way I am is that pretty soon you live up to your expectations. Blue started by putting up walls and eventually he became a wall. He could be described as insensitive, if not caring deeply about others is the definition, but there is no deception or malice involved. He just wants emotionally what he once sought physically—to be left alone.

It isn't too difficult to figure out how this desperate desire evolved. Vide Blue merely mimicked the society that produced him. A man confronted by enough closed doors in his life finally begins to close them himself. It started with the swimming pool and water

fountains in Mansfield, but escaping the South never provided respite.

**B**LUE ARRIVED IN DES MOINES, Iowa, in 1970 full of boyish glee and a young man's anticipation, joining teammates Gene Tenace, Rene Lachemann, and Bill McNulty for a cross-country drive to the parent Oakland club. But the journey was interrupted by a jail cell in Omaha, Neb. A late-night walk downtown was halted by a rookie cop. "This guy handcuffed us, took us to the station, put us in a cage," recalls Blue. The charge is jaywalking, the penalty more severe than even that misguided, inex-

perienced police officer could know. "I got claustrophobia from being in jail, in the cell itself," Blue says. It was his first time behind steel bars, a frightening experience for a young man who had known barriers of another sort all his life.

Even the door of friendship would be closed in his face—and the lesson learned. Tommy Davis was first, part teammate, part mentor, part father figure. Blue shared an apartment with Davis and two others his first year in Oakland. The veteran outfielder took the innocent under his wing, and Blue responded by perceiving Davis as "a real class guy. He was what I wanted to be." Davis

introduced Blue to Robert Gerst, his agent, and that spelled the end of Davis' Oakland career.

Whether or not Davis was traded because he befriended Blue and introduced the young man to Gerst doesn't really matter. The newspapers tied the two facts together, and soon so did the young man. His friend had lost his job because of Vida Blue.

It wasn't just the Davis incident that forced Blue to question the limits of friendship as a big-league ballplayer. The scene in the Oakland clubhouse was a far different one than had been envisioned with hungry eyes in minor league stops at Burlington, Birmingham, and Des Moines.

"I felt that players should have been closer than they were when I first came up," Blue remembers. "I thought, this is the big leagues, we're really going to be buddies. But on the big-league level, and I'm proof, players actually go their own way. In the minor leagues three guys share an apartment, and everybody chips in to make ends meet as far as sheer survival. In the big leagues everybody has a BMW, a Porsche, a Ferrari, a Mercedes, and it's 'Hey, I'm so and so.'"

When Blue says it can be hazardous to form close friendships with teammates, echoes of a confused and quickly toughened 21-year-old saying goodbye to Tommy Davis resonate in his voice. It hasn't happened since, not after that first disillusionment. Angel Mangual was Blue's only roommate, for a short while, but Mangual was married and had a family, so the two didn't socialize much.

Baseball was telling Blue, no close friends, it's too dangerous; no respect for management, it's too expensive. Society was telling Blue you can enter certain doors, but we'll always retain the right to bar entry to others, no matter how talented and successful you may become.

The regrettable side to Blue may be that he listened too well and learned his lessons much too thoroughly. Blue started manning his own barricades, and nobody has gotten in since. The only one who has come close is not a person, but a memory. The one person Vida Blue wants to share his life with is gone.

"I've always been searching for a real strong male image, since I lost my father the same year I signed my professional contract," he says in a rare moment of introspection. Tommy Davis never knew it, but that was part of the outfielder's role.

When Blue talks about his father, a poignancy enters his voice that is unfamiliar. The emotion was absent when he spoke of his career, lovers, alcoholism. And he's never completely understood the reaction.

"I can't say I was close, because the poor man worked himself to death. He worked



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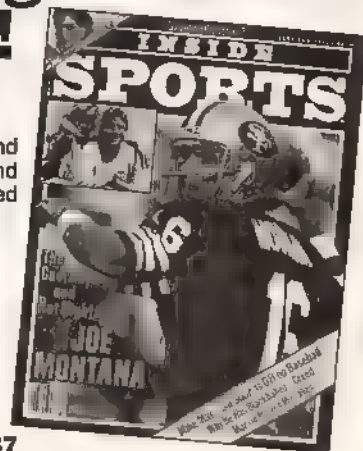
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**Blue came back from the abyss, but his bubble could still burst.**

and worked and worked, and once he would leave the steel mills he would go to work in peoples' gardens, just to make this extra money to make ends meet for the family he was supporting. He always gave me the freedom to pursue my dream of becoming a

professional athlete. But it was very sad." Vida Blue Sr. died the week Blue was to play an important football game for DeSoto High.

"There's one time that I really reflect on this and I find myself drifting back into my childhood," Blue says, finally lost in a recur-

ring memory of an event that never took place. "When I see another player bring his dad into the dressing room. When you're not a member of the elite, of being on the 25-man roster, you are invading very private territory coming into the team dressing room. But if you are an immediate relative of a player such as a brother or a son or that player's father, you get to come in and the player gets to show off his dad, and, of course, the dad is impressed with 'This is my father, Vida Blue Sr., I want you to meet Reggie Jackson.' 'Oh, you're that guy that hits the ball a long ways.' So that's one time that really gets me, mmmmh, right there. It touches me deep when I see another player doing that, and a couple of times I've had to fight back tears. I feel like God cheated me in that.

"This is the most important time for me as far as my life goes, being a professional jock and living the glamorous life that comes with my job, and I really wanted him to share in that. It would have been nice telling him, 'Hey, man, you don't have to work in that steel mill anymore, you've paid your dues.'"

That's what has been haunting Vida Blue all these years. He can't get it out of his system, can't keep it from affecting his outlook on life as he continues to seek strong male figures. It's an unpaid debt, at least emotionally, and Blue doesn't like to owe anyone.

Blue wasn't that close to his father, but it doesn't matter at all. A father is a role model, a god for a while, and the one person a man goes through life most wanting to impress. For those, like Blue, who will never be able to impress their father, the absence is eternal, an empty part of life that can never be filled.

"That's the key. I feel empty. I feel like, look at me now, I'm in Scottsdale. These people are paying for my room and board and all I have to do is show up. And I feel like I didn't contribute enough. I feel like there's a gap in there somewhere I should have been able to fill, for him if not for myself." But he has contributed, making his mother's life comfortable, sending his sisters through college. Yet it doesn't seem to matter.

The irony of Vida Blue's life is that a man with so little emotional dependency on any living person apparently maintains a much stronger dependency on someone who is not living. And that is the most horrible of burdens, because it can never be resolved.

Vida Blue is back. After just under two seasons in Kansas City and 81 days in prison, and a suspension lifted this spring *after* he had made the Giants roster. He's been through the abyss, and the worst of it was discovering there's no baseball in hell.

The bottom line in Blue's *Register* entry signals the descent. 1983—0-5, 6.01. By

August he was released, but even that wasn't the biggest blow. Within the next few days Blue had cleared waivers, which somehow still took him by surprise. The Royals may have been his employer, but baseball was his work. "I sat around my apartment two or three days and I said, 'Oh my God, the word is out.' My version of hitting bottom was losing my job."

By all accounts, Vida Blue should have given up on baseball, as it gave up on him. But life doesn't work that way, not for people like Blue. Even through hell, some of that little boy survived. The comeback was inevitable.

"The way my career was terminated, that wasn't the way I wanted to end my career," he explains. The numbers still matter to Blue, as if numbers matter compared to what he's been through. Numbers aren't a life, or can they be? Blue began this season needing nine wins for 200 and 28 strikeouts for 2,000. It's not 300 wins, or 500 home runs, but they are milestones for Vida Blue, a man who has grown up relying on a game and its statistics to define his sense of worth. And in that sense, his dependency on the game has rivaled his dependency on chemicals to keep his psyche in order.

"I had to find out within myself if I was still capable of pitching in the big leagues, effectively and competitively," he says, the pride taking over. "To be 0-5 in 1983 is going to make a great trivia question: Who was the guy who won the Cy Young Award and didn't win a game during the 1983 season and ended up—hopefully it will go like that—and ended up with 200-plus wins."

**W**E LIVE IN A THROWAWAY SOCIETY, the cynics tell us, and maybe they're right. It is especially so with our heroes. A quick glance at a toy store doll display or a grocery store magazine rack is all the evidence needed. Last year Nathan wanted Superman and this year it's He Man. Last year *People* magazine featured Farrah Fawcett on its cover, this year it's Christie Brinkley.

Vida Blue has had no trouble adjusting to this concept. He never sought the spotlight. But the realization of what that idea represents is another matter. It is the celebrity's evidence that he is to his fans no more than an object to be admired and replaced. A passing fancy.

It's a game Blue plays well, almost as well as baseball. He can be a silver-tongued devil in public, and usually is. Children love him because they sense the kindred spirit, the youthfulness and playfulness. Women cannot deny his genuine charm and wit. Given the circumstances of celebrity today, what more could Blue want?

Blue could want to be loved, really loved.

But he doesn't. He could want more attention, a bigger spotlight, but he genuinely does not. Blue just wants to be alone.

The traveling doesn't tire him, even at 35, and a major reason is the privacy. On the road, he says, there is less attention, fewer requests for time, than at home. At his house he can hide away, but on the road, sometimes, he can make himself invisible.

Growing up is taking the time to learn about yourself. Blue never had that time, not when the parade was rolling by and he was stationed front and center on the lead float. The task is to separate fiction from reality, to recognize your world for what it is, not what movies and soft-drink commercials tell you it is. It is also separating what you know of yourself from what others tell you.

Vida Blue is a perceptive man, but still he has been blinded. He has no idea where he is going, what he is going to do, who he will be. The identification, the self-definition that served him at 21 remains, but the man has changed while the self-image hasn't. The end of his career is right there, a few months or years in front of him, but it's as if Blue is driving the Maserati he's so fond of and the music is screaming from the stereo and the scenery flying by is entrancing and he can't see the hairpin turn coming up just around the bend. He even knows it's there, in some suppressed part of his brain. He can understand the question and respond that he's a procrastinator—until confronted with a new reality, he cannot prepare for it. Blue can no more prepare for a different life, one without baseball, than he could force himself to lift weights or practice his breaking pitch when he was so young and strong and invincible. Vida Blue grew into manhood too quickly and too publicly, and now he's going to grow into middle age the same way.

The legend changes but doesn't die. Twenty years from now the name Vida Blue will conjure up a number of images—those snapshots. The drugs and prison, maybe even the conflicts with Finley will be recalled along with the fastball and the charm, and that one glorious season. And that's too bad.

It's been a year and three months since Vida Blue left prison and 22 months since he's had a drink or drugs. He's never gone that long without throwing a baseball, not even in the prison yard. He's a pitcher again, not a drug addict or a convict. His label is back in place, his identity recovered. Now it's up to the rest of the world to recognize this. Vida Blue is waiting. ■

*Oregon free-lancer PETER KORN is like Blue in that he can't write and count his money at the same time—which is why he counts his money on weekends, with the help of an accountant. Peter's last piece for I.S. was on Angels manager Gene Mauch.*

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By GLENN DICKEY

## Curt Flood

**F**OR CURT FLOOD, THE pendulum has swung too far in a direction he could never have foreseen.

Flood was a pioneer in baseball. Traded from the St. Louis Cardinals to the Philadelphia Phillies in 1969, he refused to report and sued baseball over the reserve clause.

Flood failed in his quest; the U.S. Supreme Court eventually decided not to rule on his case, saying that Congress should be the body to address inequities in baseball labor laws. But Flood's case set the stage for the ruling by arbiter Peter Seitz that invalidated the reserve clause, and baseball entered the era of free agency, during which salaries have ballooned.

"No, I never dreamed that it would get to this stage," says Flood today. "I'm no expert on labor negotiations. I can't tell you if there's going to be a strike. I can only tell you I'm unhappy about what's happening."

"I know there's a lot more money coming into baseball, billions of dollars with the new TV contract, and I know the Players Association wants to make sure the players get their share. If they don't get it now, it'll be another four years before they get a chance."

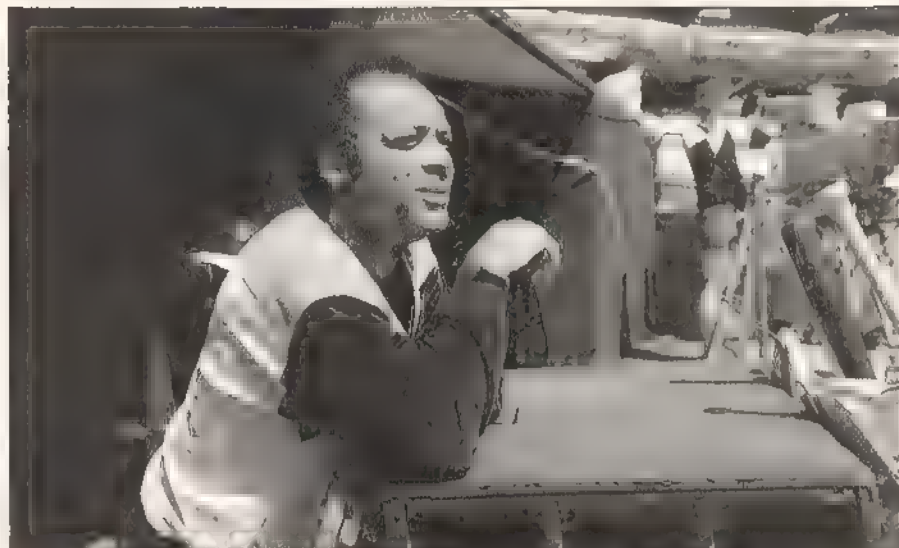
"But it does seem to me that the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction. It's just a shame that both sides couldn't have sat down years ago before it got to this stage and worked out something agreeable to both sides."

Flood's position has changed with the times, and with his own circumstances. As recently as 1981, when the players struck to retain their rights to free agency, he openly sympathized with the players.

"Yes, I'm with the ballplayers on this," he said at the time. "If they backslide now, they'll take the 'free' out of free agent. I think the players are in a position where they're getting an equitable share. What weapons do they have to keep that share, except a strike? How do you threaten a millionaire—with a gun?"

But now, Flood works for the Oakland A's in their speakers' bureau, and he sees the issue from both sides.

"I still think like a player," he says, "but I can feel for the owners, too. The Haas family



**Says Flood of big-money players not trying, 'It makes me sick.'**

[which owns the A's] and Roy Eisenhardt [a Haas son-in-law who is club president] are such decent people. They're in a situation where they're doing a good job, but they're caught up in an economic nightmare. They're losing tons of money. That's not right."

"For 60, 70 years, players got the short end of the stick. Lots of players were not really making very much money. I remember when Frank Robinson, Vada Pinson, and I came out—we all played together at Oakland Tech—and we were all signed for a \$4,000 bonus, because baseball had a bonus rule in those days. If you were signed for more, you counted against the major league roster. And when I came up to the Cardinals, I only got \$4,000 a year."

"So, I can sympathize with players who are real craftsmen, who really work at their jobs. They're finally getting rewarded, as they should be. But at the same time, I also see players who just quit on you out there, even though they're making big money. That just makes me sick."

The whole big-money scene amazes Flood, who made \$90,000 at his peak in 1967 as an All-Star center fielder on a world championship team in St. Louis. "The accounting department for the A's has to keep prodding players just to cash their checks," he says. "These kids are 21, 22, and they're making so much money they just toss their checks into a drawer or into their locker. It

drives the accounting department crazy because they don't know if the checks were lost or what."

It bothers Flood, too, that players getting big money don't seem to feel any responsibility because of it. He points in particular to a case like that of A's pitcher Mike Norris, sidelined for two years because of a combination of injury and drug/alcohol problems. At the time this article was written, Norris was inactive because he was facing trials on drug possession and driving under the influence of alcohol.

"It tears me up because the Haases are such decent people. Mike hasn't thrown a pitch in two years, but they've kept him on the payroll at about half a million a year. They didn't have to. There are morals clauses in those contracts, and I'm sure they could have gotten out from under on his, but they didn't. But what did Mike do in return?"

"Does he have any responsibility to the owners? Does he have any responsibility to the team? Does he have any responsibility to anyone? Everybody says 'poor Mike Norris,' but I know his mother, and he's just driving her up a tree."

It bothers Flood that, because of the big money paid to athletes, there's too much money going out of the game. "That's money that could be used for minor league systems and instruction. Instead, you go to the Coliseum and you see kids having to learn how to

play baseball there. You go to a game at Candlestick, and it's the same thing; they're being taught fundamentals at that level."

Nor does he think the big salaries have been an unmixed blessing for the players themselves, because the money has drawn drug dealers the way honey draws flies.

"Just as there are professional players," says Flood, "there are professional drug dealers now."

"I was in Arizona for spring training this year, and when I went to games at Mesa, Scottsdale, Phoenix, and Tempe, and I saw the same cars parked there that I see at the Coliseum. I thought, 'Boy, these people must really be baseball fans. [Ex-Pirates pitcher] Doc Ellis told me, 'Boy, you must really be naive. Those are drug dealers. They follow the teams around.'"

When he retired from baseball, after a brief and unsuccessful comeback attempt with the Washington Senators, Flood moved to Majorca, Spain, to get completely away from the game that had left him with such bitter memories.

He returned unannounced to Oakland, where he had grown up, and worked for a while in various nonbaseball jobs. An accomplished artist, he also painted portraits for people he knew, including Joe Morgan. His painting of Morgan occupies a prominent place in Morgan's showcase home in the Oakland Hills, which resembles the Taj Mahal more than it does a normal house.

Flood tried to get back into baseball in the late '70s, writing owners Bill Veeck, Charlie Finley, Ted Turner, and George Steinbrenner, and some executives of clubs—including his old club, the Cardinals. He got some cordial letters back, but no job offers.

"I think owners in general were still holding a grudge at that time," he says. "It's one thing to insult somebody, but another to get into somebody's pocket. Month after month, when they make those payments to players, I think maybe they think of me."

Nor did players at that time go out of their way to thank Flood for being a pioneer, though Flood downplays that. "For quite a while, I wasn't around for them to thank me," he says. "Anyway, you're forgotten very quickly in baseball. I know how that is, and I accepted it."

But Flood's life has changed for the better since those days. Marvin Miller, the former head of the Players Association, often reminded players that "Curt Flood got you this" in his talks to teams, so players are aware of Flood's contribution. One example came at an old-timers game in St. Louis last spring. "Bruce Sutter [then a Cardinals reliever] made a point of finding me," says Flood. "He said, 'Thanks for all of us.' It was good to hear."

Flood has been working as commissioner

of a youth baseball program in Oakland; he is working for the A's; and he has also been traveling the country, from Sarasota, Fla., to Walla Walla, Wash., giving out college scholarships on behalf of Group W. The scholarships are academic, but recipients also have to demonstrate leadership qualities and special skills.

Everywhere he goes, Flood is asked baseball questions. "When I was in Florida," he says, "the papers were full of stories saying the A's might move to Tampa. Everybody asked me if it was true. I had to tell them I didn't know. They don't consult me on decisions like that. Maybe on the lunch menu in the press room . . ."

But Flood does know this: He's concerned

about the future of the game. "Everything is money, money, money," he says. "Now, the superstitions are getting into the game, and they see their baseball teams just as advertisements for their stations."

"Last year I was making a Cutty Sark commercial with Ted Turner and John DeLoorean," he says. "Turner said to me, 'One of these days, the team is going to be playing just for me and my cameraman. It'll be a studio game.'"

"That's scary." ■

*Contributing editor GLENN DICKEY foresees the day ballplayers will wear ad patches, like race-car drivers. Glenn's last piece for I.S. was on Yankee Rickey Henderson.*

## Can Male Pattern Baldness Be Effectively Treated?

In the United States the U.S. Governmental regulatory agencies believe that in the greater majority of cases, hair loss is the beginning or advanced stages of male pattern baldness, and there are no known treatments or cures for male pattern baldness.

The notion that nothing can be done about male pattern baldness is not universally held. Recently, the Canadian equivalent of the United States Food and Drug Administration recognized a hair restorer, containing a precise blend of amino acids, as both safe and effective. In Europe, a hair preparation developed at a major university, containing an embryonic tissue complex, has been used by over three million people and is reported to cause a regrowth of hair.

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# NUMBERS

## SLUGGERS YOUNG AND OLD

Hank Aaron was still capable of hitting 40 home runs at the age of 39, whereas Mel Ott cracked 42 round-trippers at the tender age of 20. Here are the other home run leaders by age since 1900

Age	Player	Team	Year	HRs
17	Tommy Brown	Dodgers	1945	2
18	Phil Cavaretta	Cubs	1935	8
19	Tony Conigliaro	Red Sox	1964	24
20	Mel Ott	Giants	1929	42
21	Eddie Mathews	Braves	1953	47
22	Joe DiMaggio	Yankees	1937	46
23	Reggie Jackson	A's	1969	47
24	Jimmie Fox	A's	1932	58
25	Babe Ruth	Yankees	1920	54
26	Roger Maris	Yankees	1961	61
27	Hank Greenberg	Tigers	1938	58
28	Harmon Killebrew	Twins	1964	49
29	Mickey Mantle	Yankees	1961	54
30	Hack Wilson	Cubs	1930	56
31	Lou Gehrig	Yankees	1934	49
	Willie Mays	Giants	1962	49
32	Babe Ruth	Yankees	1927	60
33	Babe Ruth	Yankees	1928	54
34	Willie Mays	Giants	1965	52
35	Babe Ruth	Yankees	1930	49
36	Babe Ruth	Yankees	1931	46
37	Hank Aaron	Braves	1971	47
38	Ted Williams	Red Sox	1957	38
39	Hank Aaron	Braves	1973	40
40	Hank Aaron	Braves	1974	20
41	Ted Williams	Red Sox	1960	29
42	Carl Yastrzemski	Red Sox	1982	16
43	Carl Yastrzemski	Red Sox	1983	10
44	Sam Rice	Red Sox	1934	1
45	Jack Quinn	A's	1930	1

By Bill Deane

## CONTACT SLUGGERS

Free-swinging sluggers have the reputation for striking out frequently. Among hitters with 250 or more career home runs here are the 10 with the best strikeout-to-home run ratios.

Player	SO	HR	SO:HR
Joe DiMaggio	369	361	1.02
Yogi Berra	415	358	1.16
Ted Kluszewski	365	279	1.31
Ted Williams	709	521	1.36
Johnny Mize	524	359	1.46
Stan Musial	696	475	1.47
Lou Gehrig	789	493	1.60
Chuck Klein	521	300	1.74
Mel Ott	896	511	1.75
Hank Aaron	1,383	755	1.83

By Bill Deane

## AVOIDING SPLINTERS

These are the iron men, the players who played the highest percentage of their team's games over a 15-year period of their career (1900-84).

Player	Years	Games Played	Games Missed	Pct.
Pete Rose	1969-83	2,342	28	98.8
Brooks Robinson	1960-74	2,353	56	97.7
Sam Crawford	1901-15	2,219	57	97.5
Hank Aaron	1955-69	2,304	79	96.7
Billy Williams	1961-75	2,338	83	96.6
Willie Mays	1954-68	2,281	82	96.5
Nellie Fox	1950-64	2,248	108	95.4
Mel Ott	1929-43	2,199	106	95.4
Ernie Banks	1954-68	2,282	117	95.1
Carl Yastrzemski	1962-76	2,293	125	94.8

By Bill Deane

## ETHNIC POWER

Is a player's ethnic background an indicator of home run power? If you study the following compilation, you'll see it's not who a player's parents were but how he swings a bat that makes him a home run king.

Polish	Years	HRs
Stan Musial	1941-63	475
Carl Yastrzemski	1961-83	452
Greg Luzinski	1970-84	307
A. Simmons	1924-44	307
Ted Kluszewski	1947-61	279

Italian	Years	HRs
Rocky Colavito	1955-68	374
Joe DiMaggio	1936-51	361
Yogi Berra	1946-65	358
Ron Santo	1960-74	342
Joe Torre	1960-77	252

Black	Years	HRs
Hank Aaron	1954-76	755
Willie Mays	1951-72	660
Frank Robinson	1956-76	586
Willie McCovey	1959-78	521
Ernie Banks	1953-71	512
Reggie Jackson	1967-84	503*

Hispanic	Years	HRs
Orlando Cepeda	1958-74	379
Tony Perez	1964-84	371*
Roberto Clemente	1955-72	240
Ben Oglive	1971-84	220*
Tony Oliva	1962-76	220
Rico Carty	1963-79	204
Tony Armas	1976-84	190*
Cesar Cedeno	1970-84	190*

Jewish	Years	HRs
Hank Greenberg	1930-47	331
Sid Gordon	1941-55	202
Al Rosen	1947-56	192
Mike Epstein	1966-74	130

American Indian	Years	HRs
Bob Johnson	1933-45	288
Rudy York	1934-48	277
Pepper Martin	1928-44	59
Roy Johnson	1929-38	58

Canadian-Born	Years	HRs
Jeff Heath	1936-49	194
George Selkirk	1934-42	108
Pete Ward	1962-70	98
Terry Puhl	1977-84	52*
Tip O'Neill	1883-92	52

\*Active players' statistics complete through the 1984 season.

By Bill Deane

## KICKING EFFICIENCY

NFL kickers are ranked based on total points scored, but a more effective way of gauging kickers' performance would be to rank them according to points scored as a percentage of possible points scored. While Ray Werschung led all kickers with 131 points last year and Jan Stenerud was 22nd with 90 points, Stenerud was the most accurate kicker. Here is how the 28 kickers stacked up during the 1984 season. (For teams that used more than one kicker, the man with the most attempts is listed.)

Rank	Player, Team	XP-XPA	FG-FGA	Pts.-Poss.	Pts.	Pct.
1	Jan Stenerud, Vikings	30-31	20-23	90-100	90.0	90.0
2	Norm Johnson, Seahawks	50-51	20-24	110-123	89.4	89.4
3	Joe Cooper, Oilers	13-13	11-13	46-52	88.5	88.5
4	Al Del Greco, Packers	34-34	9-12	61-70	87.1	87.1
5	Tony Franklin, Patriots	42-42	22-28	108-126	85.7	85.7
6	Rafael Septien, Cowboys	33-34	23-29	102-121	84.3	84.3
7	Paul McFadden, Eagles	26-27	30-37	116-138	84.1	84.1
8	Bob Thomas, Bears	35-37	22-28	101-121	83.5	83.5
9	Mark Moseley, Redskins	48-51	24-31	120-144	83.3	83.3
10	Gary Anderson, Steelers	45-45	24-32	117-141	83.0	83.0
11	Mike Lansford, Rams	37-38	25-33	112-137	81.8	81.8
12	Morten Andersen, Saints	34-34	20-27	94-115	81.7	81.7
13	Ray Werschung, 49ers	56-56	25-35	131-161	81.4	81.4
14	Chris Bahr, Raiders	40-42	20-27	100-123	81.3	81.3
	Mick Luckhurst, Falcons	31-31	20-27	91-112	81.3	81.3
	Ed Murray, Lions	31-31	20-27	91-112	81.3	81.3
17	Rich Karlis, Broncos	38-41	21-28	101-125	80.8	80.8
18	Obed Arun, Buccaneers	38-40	19-26	95-118	80.5	80.5
19	Matt Bahr, Browns	25-25	24-32	97-121	80.2	80.2
	Pat Leahy, Jets	38-39	17-24	89-111	80.2	80.2
21	Jim Breech, Bengals	37-37	22-31	103-130	79.2	79.2
22	Nick Lowery, Chiefs	35-35	23-33	104-134	77.6	77.6
23	Rolf Benirschke, Chargers	41-41	17-26	92-119	77.3	77.3
24	Neil O'Donoghue, Cardinals	48-51	23-35	117-156	75.0	75.0
25	Uwe von Schamann, Dolphins	66-70	9-19	93-127	73.2	73.2
26	Raul Allegre, Colts	14-14	11-18	47-68	69.1	69.1
27	Joe Danelo, Bills	17-17	8-16	41-65	63.1	63.1
28	Ali Haji Sheik, Giants	32-35	17-33	83-134	61.9	61.9

By Dave Brown

## POWER AND CONTROL

Not all strikeout artists have great control. Among pitchers with at least 2,000 career strikeouts, here are the top 10 of all time in getting the ball over the plate, as determined by their strikeout-to-walk ratios.

Pitcher	SO	BB	SO:BB
Juan Marchal (R)	2303	709	3.25
Fergie Jenkins (R)	3192	997	3.20
Christy Mathewson (R)	2511	846	2.97
Sandy Koufax (L)	2396	817	2.93
Don Drysdale (R)	2486	855	2.91
Rube Waddell (L)	2316	803	2.88
Jim Bunning (R)	2855	1000	2.86
Bert Blyleven (R)	2669	939	2.84*
Don Sutton (R)	3208	1164	2.76*
Tom Seaver (R)	3403	1265	2.69*

\*Active players' statistics complete through the 1984 season

By Bill Deane

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# THE GOOD DOCTOR

**W**ho plays in the official Major League Baseball Players Association band?

H.H., RIVER CITY, IOWA

Steve Sax, Frank Viola, Rob Picciolo, Sam Horn, and Jimmy Key.

**S**ettle a bet for me. My grandfather says Ty Cobb was the greatest hitter who ever lived. My father says Ted Williams was the greatest hitter who ever lived. I say Pete Rose is the greatest hitter who ever lived. Who do you say?

R.C., ANAHEIM, CALIFORNIA

I say Sinatra had more hits than any of 'em.

**J**ust how many Reggie candy bars were sold a few years ago, after Reggie Jackson signed with the Yankees?

R.E., OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA

Exactly 44 Reggie bars were bought in New York stores, 22 of which went to Rickey Henderson as part of his new contract. A man selling Reggie marshmallows recently visited the Yankee Stadium clubhouse, but was smashed in the face.

**C**an't anyone in Great Britain get past the notion that tennis players have to wear white clothes? Why must Wimbledon contestants always dress like surgeons ready to operate? You're a colorful guy. Tell those limeys to start wearing some green.

P.S., BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

John McEnroe shocked everyone in England last year when he showed up wearing white shoes, white socks, white shorts, a white shirt—and purple, yellow, and orange hair. "I like the punk look," McEnroe told reporters. "The rules don't say anything about what color hair you can wear. Wait until you see Martina with a Mohawk!"

**D**uring the NCAA basketball tournament, CBS-TV always talked about the "Road to Lexington." I hear there's a Road to Louisiana, but it stops all of a sudden and goes nowhere.

N.F., NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

That's right. It's a Tulane highway.

**D**id the dude in the Lite beer commercials really ever do any surfing? I don't trust anybody who goes around saying, "Groovy."

P.F., OMAHA, NEBRASKA

Personally, I think the only foam that guy ever saw was in his beer glass. Mickey Spillane, on the other hand, was a heck of a surfer. He used to ride the wild surf with a doll on his shoulders, a revolver in his fist, and a typewriter on the board.

**A**lex Karras appears in everything I watch these days. "Webster." "Porky's." "Against All Odds." "Victor, Victoria." I can't look up without seeing Alex Karras. He must be one of the most popular stars in Hollywood.

C.F., ANGEL BEACH, FLORIDA

Wait until 1986, when you will see Alex Karras as Salieri in the road company of "Amadeus," as Adrian in the movie "Rocky IV," as Brooke Shields' lover in a remake of "Wuthering Heights," and as Alex in a Stroh's beer commercial.

**O**ne night last spring I went to an NBA game in Milwaukee. Not only did Terry Cummings of the Bucks play a great game—he sang the national anthem, too. Does this sensational athlete have other hidden talents?

I.T., PONTIAC, MICHIGAN

Certainly. Cummings will be Mozart in the road company, opposite Karras.

**G**loria Steinem was a wonderful golfer when she was young, they tell me, and could have turned pro. Instead, she became a writer, an editor, and an active feminist. Why did she quit golf?

N.L., ROSWELL, NEW MEXICO

Because when Steinem was young, she asked her pig of a male partner for an iron, and he handed her the kind you use to press clothes. She wrapped a mashie around his throat, stormed off the course, and never picked up a club again.

**T**his situation cropped up in our bridge game the other night. Mr. Goren had seven spades. Mr. Sharif bid two no trump.

*My wife said, "Pass." I just sat there like a dummy. What should I have done?*

G.K., LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

Look, buster. We don't do bridge problems. This here's a sports magazine, see? We do serious sports here, see? We don't do cards. Just baseball, basketball, boxing, hockey, football, and swimsuits, that's it.

**J**ust how big was the Los Angeles Times newspaper's sports section during the 1984 Summer Olympics?

C.L., HOUSTON, TEXAS

All we know for sure is that Vasily Alexeev, visiting California on a good-will tour, pulled a groin muscle lifting it off a newsstand.

**J**ust how bad off financially has the United States Football League become?

D.F., EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J.

So bad that Michael Jackson, Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Wonder, Diana Ross, and Bob Dylan have gone back to the studio to raise money by cutting a record called "We Aren't the World Football League."

**I**s it true that the new Air Jordan basketball shoes will help me jump higher?

T.B., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

Yes, wearing those shoes Dick Motta was able to enter the slam-dunk competition.

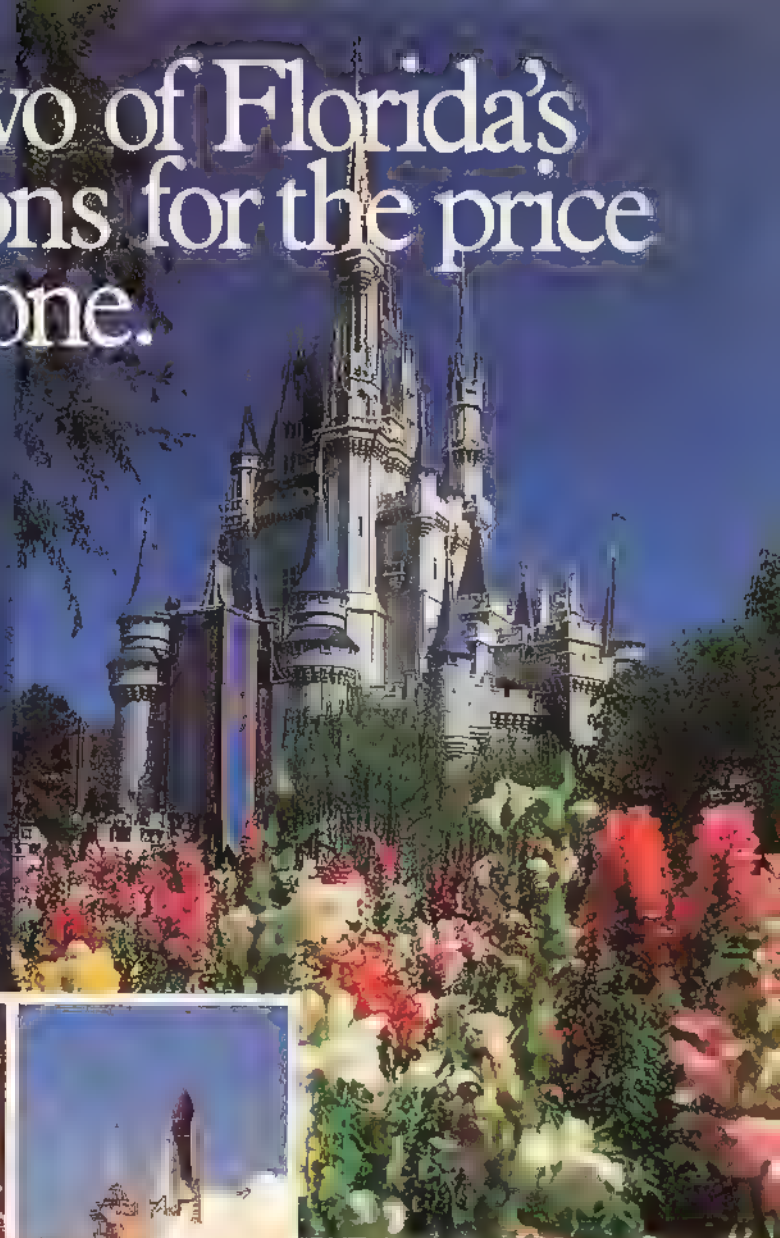
**T**ell me one reason why the city of Vancouver, British Columbia, puts up with the use of the word "Canucks" as the name of its hockey team. It's an insult to all good Canadian citizens, or Canadian citizens, as we say in Montreal.

G.F., MONTREAL, QUEBEC

Oui. I say we turn the tables and start calling some American team the "Amucks." On second thought, I'd rather be called an Amuck than a Penguin.

*In a fever to know what really goes on in the world of sports? Will you feel awful until you find out? Send for a diagnosis to: The Good Doctor, 1020 Church Street, Evanston, Illinois, 60201—then wait patiently.*

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# THE FAN

By F LEE BAILEY

## In Defense Of the Sea

**T**O ME, BOATS AND being on water are a wonderful isolation. It's a capsule environment, an extremely pleasant atmosphere where I can crank out a book, or write an article or legal brief. Boats give me an opportunity to shut things down for a while, escape from those incessant phone calls. The best view of the world is from a boat. I find it stimulating because the ocean is uncluttered, the sea gives your imagination free rein.

I need this kind of soothing escape because the legal profession is so demanding, so taxing—I'm constantly grappling with other people's problems. There is so much hassle in trying to be patient with people who are demanding explanations, and there are some real anxieties involved in most cases. These worries bother me less than they do most of my colleagues, but the tensions are there, and boating is a great release.

Boating is a sport in which I find a lot of inner meaning. I've always admired those people who don't get lonely when making decisions, or who don't have to consult someone before taking action. The people who can withstand these pressures are probably the healthiest people around—they're mountain-top people. Boating has this same flavor when you're out on the ocean, *you're the captain, you either bring that boat in or nobody will. Nobody.*

I've faced troubling situations. Not in the Bahamas—where I now keep one of my 31-foot, center-console Chris Crafts—because you usually don't encounter hurricanes down there. My boat's very fast—it's powered by two 235 Johnson outboards, so it's great for going from here to there, water skiing, or scuba diving.



*'I admire people who can withstand the pressure of making decisions. Out on the ocean, you're the captain, you either bring that boat in or nobody will. Nobody.'*

But I have taken boats from the Bahamas to New England, usually 500 miles a day in open ocean, and you do confront some rough weather, 10- to 15-foot seas, and bad winds. The worst situation I've been in was in the Grand Banks near Nova Scotia, when I came back from a race to Halifax. We could barely keep the boat afloat. We got out of the Halifax harbor in a bad storm, and I didn't have the equipment to get back in. It's a treacherous harbor—I came within 60 feet of getting hit by a huge Soviet ship. I had no way of getting back in, and the coast of Nova Scotia is probably the worst in the world—all rocks and poorly marked. I could have easily lost the boat, and no one would ever have found me.

There are moments when you think, hell, am I going to get out of this? You invite these moments because you've taken on a risk, but I'm a believer that a disciplined person who doesn't succumb to panic can handle a machine, boat, helicopter, airplane, anything, and get through.

I don't look for these storms, or any other kind of trouble, to test my mettle. I do believe, though, that I can handle these

situations, and that frame of mind or conditioning allows me to handle all types of unexpected events in a courtroom. Decisions on the water don't have to be made as swiftly as in a plane or during a trial. But when boating in heavy seas or bad weather, you have to be able to think on your feet, to choose wisely.

Boating is the reward side of all my hard work in the courtroom. I'm currently working on cases that concern the Soviet downing of that Korean airliner and the Bhopal, India, toxic gas disaster, and boating is a release from those tensions.

I've always been a water person. I summered on the coast of Maine when I was very young, and started to build rafts out of logs. Later on, after joining the Marines, I took the Sam Shepard murder case [1961] and discovered that his

brother Steve was an avid sailor. He had a yacht and he got me hooked on boating. One summer I competed in the Marble Head to Halifax race and came in next to last. William F. Buckley was last.

Leaving the law to command a ship may sound romantic, but it has no appeal for me. I'm very content to remain in the courtroom. In court there are always critical decisions to be made, and I'm the only one who can help the person in trouble. There are more options in a courtroom, so you have more control over a problem. In a boat you can run out of options, and the storm still won't go away. In a courtroom, as your decision-making improves, you cut down mistakes—a mismatch eventually develops, and the better lawyer can then go right for the jugular.

I love boating, but you just don't have this type of control on the ocean. And maybe that's the true beauty of the sport—the unknown. ■

*Celebrated lawyer F. LEE BAILEY has remained the calm captain during his storm-tossed life in the courtroom, which included the sensational Patty Hearst trial.*



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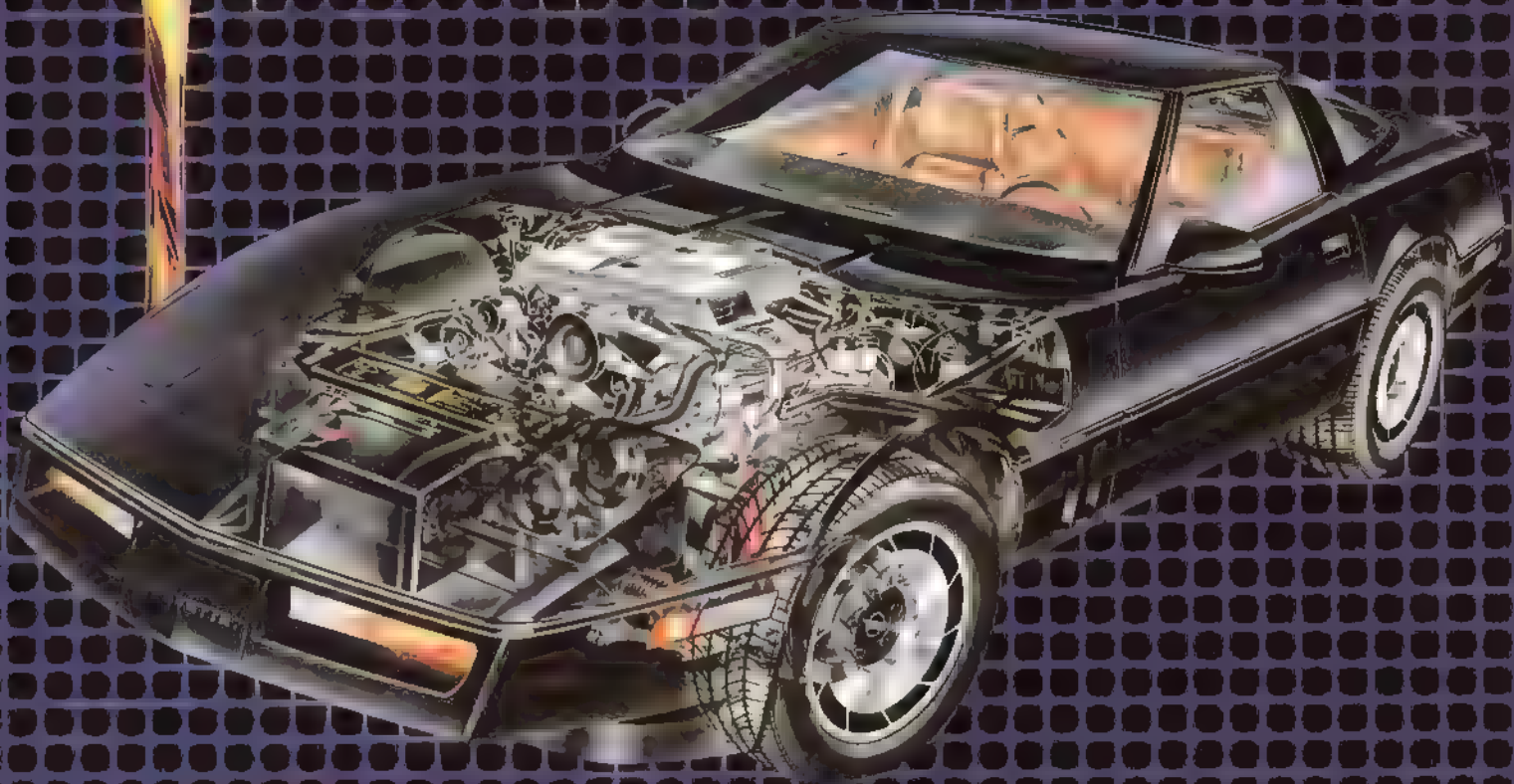
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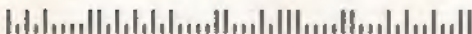
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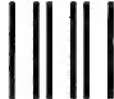
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